



FARM RHYMES

James
Whitcomb
Riley

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BY WILL VAWTER

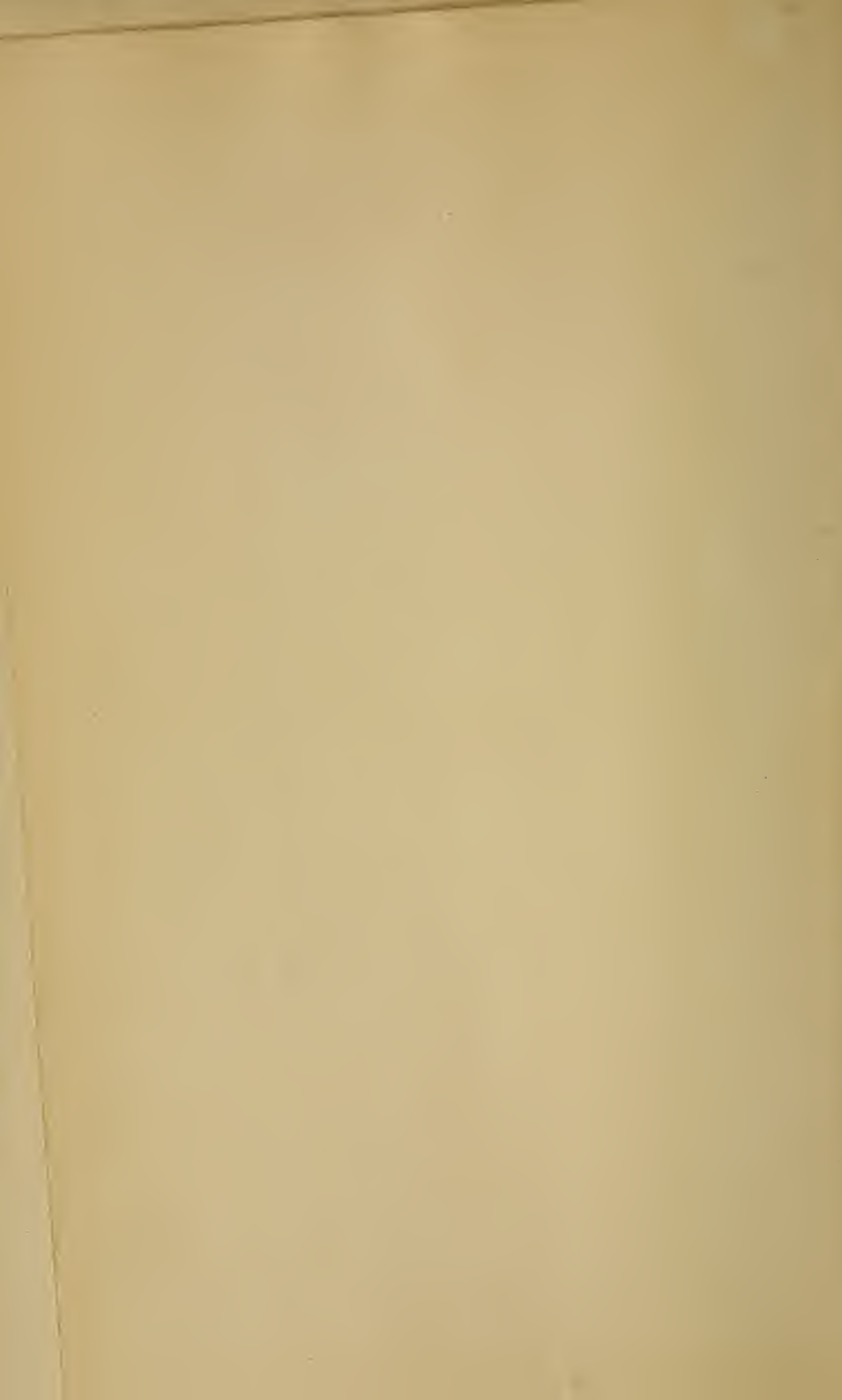


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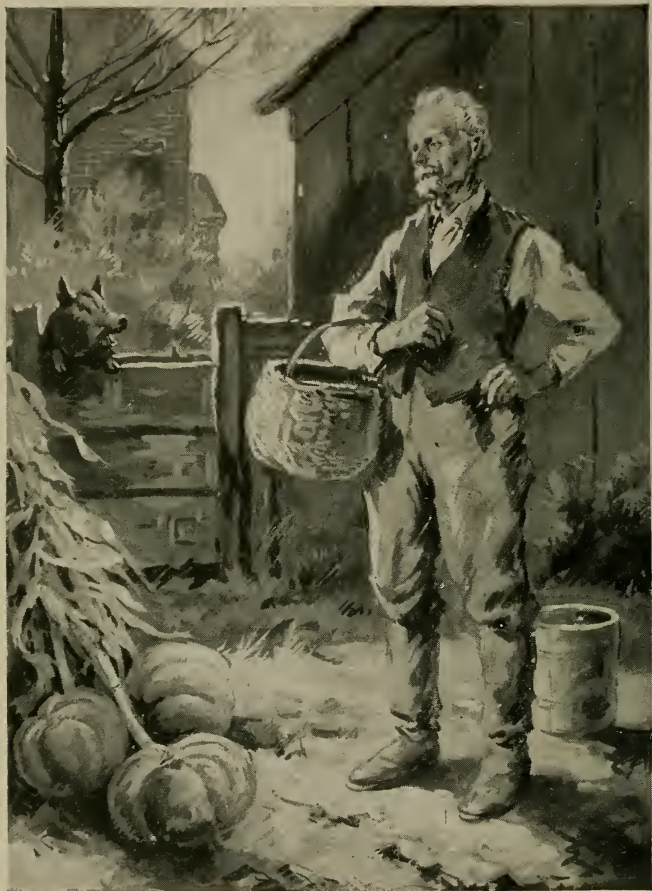






RILEY FARM-RHYMES





RILEY

FARM-RHYMES

JAMES
WHITCOMB RILEY
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ILLUSTRATED BY
WILL VAWTER



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Copyright, 1883, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1894,
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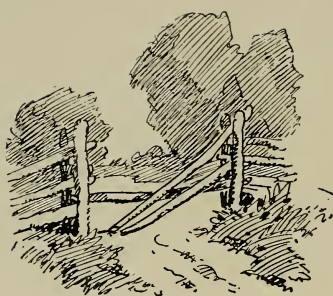
INSCRIBED WITH ALL GRATEFUL ESTEEM
TO
THE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED PEOPLE



*THE deadnin' and the thicket's jes' a-b'ilin' full of
June,
From the rattle o' the cricket, to the yallar-ham-
mer's tune;
And the catbird in the bottom and the sap-suck on
the snag,
Seems ef they can't—od-rot-'em!—jest do nothin'
else but brag!*

*They's music in the twitter of the bluebird and the
jay,
And that sassy little critter jest a-peckin' all the day;
They's music in the "flicker," and they's music in
the thrush,
And they's music in the snicker o' the chipmunk in
the brush!—*

*They's music all around me!—And I go back, in a
dream
Sweeter yit than ever found me fast asleep:—And,
in the stream
That ust to split the medder whare the dandylions
growed,
I stand knee-deep, and redder than the sunset down
the road.*

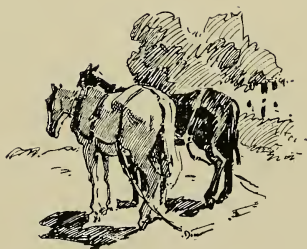


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RILEY FARM-RHYMES





WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

WHEN the frost is on the punkin and the
fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin'
turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of
the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the
fence;
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of
peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bare-headed, and goes out to
feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in
the shock.

WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

They's something kindo' harty-like about the
atmوسفere

When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall
is here—

Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on
the trees,

And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of
the bees;

But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through
the haze

Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn
days

Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in
the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tassels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as
the morn;

The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but
still

A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed
to fill;



WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the
shed;

The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover over-
head!—

O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in
the shock!

Then your apples all is getherd, and the ones a feller
keeps

Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yellor
heaps;

And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-
folks is through

With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse
and saussage, too! . . .

I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could
be

As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call
around on *me*—

I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin'
flock—

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in
the shock!



FESSLER'S BEES

“**T**ALKIN’ ’bout yer bees,” says Ike,
 Speakin’ slow and ser’ous-like,
 “D’ ever tell you ’bout old ‘Bee’—
 Old ‘Bee’ Fessler?” Ike says-he!
 “Might call him a *bee-expert*,
 When it come to handlin’ bees,—
 Roll the sleeves up of his shirt
 And wade in amongst the trees
 Where a swarm ’u’d settle, and—
 Blam’dest man on top of dirt!—
 Rake ’em with his naked hand
 Right back in the hive ag’in,
 Jes’ as easy as you please!
 Nary bee ’at split the breeze
 Ever jabbed a stinger in

FESSLER'S BEES

Old 'Bee' Fessler—jes' in fun,
Er in *airnest*—nary one!—
Couldn't agg one *on* to, nuther,
Ary one way er the other!

"Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,
"Made a speshyality
Jes' o' bees; and built a shed—
Len'th about a half a mild!
Had about a *thousan'* head
O' hives, I reckon—tame and wild!
Durndest buzzin' ever wuz—
Wuss'n telegraph-poles does
When they're sockin' home the news
Tight as they kin let 'er loose!
Visitors rag out and come
Clean from town to hear 'em hum,
And stop at the kivered bridge;
But wuz some 'u'd cross the ridge
Allus, and go clos'ter—so 's
They could *see* 'em hum, I s'pose!
'Peared-like strangers down that track
Allus met folks comin' back
Lookin' extry fat and hearty
Fer a city picnic party!

FESSLER'S BEES

“ ‘Fore he went to Floridy,
Old ‘Bee’ Fessler,” Ike says—he—
“Old ‘Bee’ Fessler couldn’t bide
Childern on his place,” says Ike.
“Yit, fer all, they’d climb inside
And tromp round there, keerless-like,
In their bare feet. ‘Bee’ could tell
Ev’ry town-boy by his yell—
So ‘s ‘at when they bounced the fence,
Didn’t make no difference!
He’d jes’ git down on one knee
In the grass and pat the bee!—
And, ef ‘t ‘adn’t stayed stuck in,
Fess’ ‘u’d set the sting ag’in,
‘N’ potter off, and wait around
Fer the old famillyer sound.
Allus boys there, more or less,
Scootin’ round the premises!
When the buckwheat wuz in bloom,
Lawzy! how them bees ‘u’d boom
Round the boys ‘at crossed that way
Fer the crick on Saturday!
Never seemed to me su’prisin’
‘At the sting o’ bees ‘uz p’izin!

FESSLER'S BEES

“ ‘Fore he went to Floridy,”
Ike says, “nothin’ ’bout a bee
’At old Fessler didn’t know,—
W’y, it jes’ ’peared-like ’at he
Knowed their language, high and low:
Claimed he told jes’ by their buzz
What their wants and wishes wuz!
Peek in them-air little holes
Round the porches o’ the hive—
Drat their pesky little souls!—
Could ’a’ skinned the man alive!
Bore right in there with his thumb,
And squat down and scrape the gum
Outen ev’ry hole, and blow
’N’ bresh the crumbs off, don’t you know!
Take the roof off, and slide back
Them-air glass concerns they pack
Full o’ honey, and jes’ lean
’N’ grabble ’mongst ’em fer the queen!
Fetch her out and *show* you to her—
Jes’, you might say, *interview* her!

“Year er two,” says Ike, says-he,
“ ‘Fore he went to Floridy,

FESSLER'S BEES

Fessler struck the theory,
Honey was the same as *love*—
You could make it day and night:
Said them bees o' his could be
Got jes' twic't the work out of
Ef a feller managed right.
He contended ef bees found
Blossoms all the year around,
He could git 'em down at once
To work all the *winter* months
Same as *summer*. So, one fall,
When their summer's work wuz done,
'Bee' turns in and robs 'em all;
Loads the hives then, one by one,
On the cyars, and 'lowed he'd see
Ef bees loafed in *Floridy*!
Said he bet he'd know the reason
Ef *his* didn't work that season!

"And," says Ike, "it's jes'," says-he,
"Like old Fessler says to me:
'Any man kin fool a *bee*,
Git him down in *Floridy*!'
'Peared at fust, as ole 'Bee' said,
Fer to kind o' turn their head



FESSLER'S BEES

Fer a spell; but, bless you! they
Didn't lose a half a day
Altogether!—Jes' lit in
Them-air tropics, and them-air
Cacktusses a-ripen-nin',
'N' magnolyers, and sweet peas,
'N' 'simmon and pineapple trees,
'N' ripe bananers, here and there,
'N' dates a-danglin' in the breeze,
'N' figs and reezins ev'rywhere,
All waitin' jes' fer Fessler's bees!
'N' Fessler's bees, with gaumy wings,
A-gittin' down and *whoopin'* things!—
Fessler kind o' overseein'
'Em, and sort o' '*hee-o-heein'*'!

“ 'Fore he went to *Floridy*,
Old 'Bee' Fessler,” Ike says-he,
“Wuzn't counted, jes' to say,
Mean er or'n'ry anyway;
On'y ev'ry 'tarnel dime
'At 'u'd pass him on the road
He'd ketch up with, ev'ry time;
And no mortal ever knowed

FESSLER'S BEES

Him to spend a copper cent—
'Less on some fool-'speriment
With them *bees*—like that-un he
Played on 'em in Floridy.
Fess', of course, *he* tuck his ease,
But 'twus *bilious* on the bees!
Sweat, you know, 'u'd jes' stand out
On their *forreds*—pant and groan,
And grunt round and limp about!—
And old 'Bee,' o' course, a-knowin'
'Twuzn't no fair shake to play
On them pore dumb insecks, ner
To abuse 'em thataway.
Bees has rights, I'm here to say,
And that's all they ast him fer!
Man as mean as *that*, jes' 'pears,
Could 'a' worked bees on the sheers!
Cleared big money—well, I guess,
'Bee' shipped honey, more er less,
Into ev'ry state, perhaps,
Ever putt down in the maps!

"But by time he fetched 'em back
In the Spring ag'in," says Ike,

FESSLER'S BEES

“They wuz actin’ s’picious-like:
Though they ’peared to lost the track
O’ ev’rything they saw er heard,
They’d lay round the porch, and gap’
At their shadders in the sun,
Do-less like, ontel some bird
Suddently ’u’d maybe drap
In a bloomin’ churry tree,
Twitterin’ a tune ’at run
In their minds familiously!
They’d revive up, kind o’, then,
Like they argied: ‘Well, it’s be’n
The most longest summer we
Ever saw er want to see!
Must be *right*, though, er *old “Bee”*
’U’d notify us!’ they says-ee;
And they’d sort o’ square their chin
And git down to work ag’in—
Moanin’ round their honey-makin’,
Kind o’ like their head was achin’,
Tetchin’ fer to see how they
Trusted Fessler thataway—
Him a-lazin’ round, and smirkin’
To hisse’f to see ’em workin’!

FESSLER'S BEES

"But old 'Bee,' " says Ike, says-he,—
"Now where is he? *Where's* he gone?
Where's the head he helt so free?
Where's his pride and vanity?
What's his hopes a-restin' on?—
Never knowed a man," says Ike,
"Take advantage of a bee,
'At affliction didn't strike
Round in that vicinity!
Sinners allus suffers some,
And *old Fessler's* reck'nin' come!
That-air man to-day is jes'
Like the grass 'at Scriptur' says
Cometh up, and then turns in
And jes' gits cut down ag'in!

"Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,
"Says, last fall, says he to me—
'Ike,' says he, 'them bees has jes'
Ciphered out my or'n'riness!
Nary bee in ary swarm
On the whole endurin' farm
Won't have nothin' more to do
With a man as mean as I've

FESSLER'S BEES

Be'n to them, last year er two!
Nary bee in ary hive
But'll turn his face away,
Like they ort, whenever they
Hear my footprints drawin' nigh!
And old 'Bee,' he'd sort o' shy
Round oneasy in his cheer,
Wipe his eyes, and yit the sap,
Spite o' all, 'u'd haf' to drap,
As he wound up: 'Wouldn't keer
Quite so much ef they'd jes' light
In and settle things up right,
Like they ort; but—blame the thing!—
'Pears-like they won't even *sting*!
Pepper me, the way I felt,
And I'd thank 'em, ev'ry welt!
And as miz'able and mean
As 'Bee' looked, ef you'd 'a' seen
Them-air hungry eyes," says Ike,
"You'd fergive him, more'n like.

"Wisht you had 'a' knowed old 'Bee'
'Fore he went to Floridy!"



WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES

IN Spring, when the green gits back in the trees,
And the sun comes out and *stays*,
And yer boots pulls on with a good tight squeeze,
And you think of yer bare-foot days;
When you *ort* to work and you want to *not*,
And you and yer wife agrees
It's time to spade up the garden-lot,
When the green gits back in the trees—
Well! work is the least o' *my* idees
When the green, you know, gits back in the
trees!



WHEN THE GREEN GITs BACK IN THE TREES

When the green gits back in the trees, and bees
Is a-buzzin' aroun' ag'in
In that kind of a lazy go-as-you-please
Old gait they bum roun' in;
When the groun's all bald whare the hay-rick
stood,
And the crick's riz, and the breeze
Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,
And the green gits back in the trees,—
I like, as I say, in sich scenes as these,
The time when the green gits back in the trees!

When the whole tail-feathers o' Wintertime
Is all pulled out and gone!
And the sap it thaws and begins to climb,
And the swet it starts out on
A feller's forred, a-gittin' down
At the old spring on his knees—
I kindo' like jest a-loaferin' roun'
When the green gits back in the trees—
Jest a-potterin' roun' as I—durn—please—
When the green, you know, gits back in the
trees!



WET-WEATHER TALK

IT hain't no use to grumble and complane;
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
W'y, rain's my choice.

Men ginerly, to all intents—
Although they're apt to grumble some—
Puts most theyr trust in Providence,
And takes things as they come—
That is, the commonality
Of men that's lived as long as me
Has watched the world enough to learn
They're not the boss of this concern.

WET-WEATHER TALK

With *some*, of course, it's different—

I've saw *young* men that knowed it all,
And didn't like the way things went

On this terrestchul ball;—

But all the same, the rain, some way,

Rained jest as hard on picnic day;

Er, when they railly *wanted* it,

It mayby wouldn't rain a bit!

In this existunce, dry and wet

Will overtake the best of men—

Some little skift o' clouds'll shet

The sun off now and then.—

And mayby, whilse you're wundern who

You've fool-like lent your umbrell' to,

And *want* it—out'll pop the sun,

And you'll be glad you hain't got none!

It aggervates the farmers, too—

They's too much wet, er too much sun,

Er work, er waitin' round to do

Before the plowin' 's done:

And mayby, like as not, the wheat,

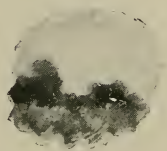
Jest as it's lookin' hard to beat,

WET-WEATHER TALK

Will ketch the storm—and jest about
The time the corn's a-jintin' out.

These-here *cy-clones* a-foolin' round—
And back'ard crops!—and wind and rain!—
And yit the corn that's wallerd down
May elbow up again!—
They hain't no sense, as I can see,
Fer mortuls, sich as us, to be
A-faultin' Natchur's wise intents,
And lockin' horns with Providence!

It hain't no use to grumble and complane;
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
W'y, rain's my choice.





THOUGHTS FER THE DISCOURAGED FARMER

THE summer winds is sniffin' round the bloomin'
locus' trees;

And the clover in the pastur' is a big day fer the bees,
And they been a-swiggin' honey, above board and on
the sly,

Tel they stutter in theyr buzzin' and stagger as they
fly.

The flicker on the fence-rail 'pears to jest spit on his
wings

And roll up his feathers, by the sassy way he sings;
And the hoss-fly is a-whettin'-up his forelegs fer biz,
And the off-mare is a-switchin' all of her tale they is.

THOUGHTS FER THE DISCOURAGED FARMER

You can hear the blackbirds jawin' as they foller up
the plow—

Oh, theyr bound to git theyr brekfast, and theyr not
a-carin' how;

So they quarrel in the furries, and they quarrel on
the wing—

But theyr peaceabler in pot-pies than any other
thing:

And it's when I git my shotgun drawed up in stiddy
rest,

She's as full of tribbellation as a yellor-jacket's nest;
And a few shots before dinner, when the sun's a-
shinin' right,

Seems to kindo'-sorto' sharpen up a feller's appetite!

They's been a heap o' rain, but the sun's out to-day,
And the clouds of the wet spell is all cleared away,
And the woods is all the greener, and the grass is
greener still;

It may rain again to-morry, but I don't think it will.
Some says the crops is ruined, and the corn's
drownded out,

And prophasy the wheat will be a failure, without
doubt;



THOUGHTS FER THE DISCOURAGED FARMER

But the kind Providence that has never failed us
yet,
Will be on hands onc't more at the 'levenh hour,
I bet!

Does the medder-lark complane, as he swims high
and dry
Through the waves of the wind and the blue of the
sky?

Does the quail set up and whissel in a disappointed
way,

Er hang his head in silunce, and sorrow all the day?
Is the chipmuck's health a-failin'?—Does he walk,
er does he run?

Don't the buzzards ooze around up thare just like
they've allus done?

Is they anything the matter with the rooster's lungs
er voice?

Ort a mortul be complainin' when dumb animals
rejoice?

Then let us, one and all, be contentud with our lot;
The June is here this morning, and the sun is shining
hot.

THOUGHTS FER THE DISCURAGED FARMER

Oh! let us fill our harts up with the glory of the day,
And banish ev'ry doubt and care and sorrow fur
away!

Whatever be our station, with Providence fer guide,
Sich fine circumstances ort to make us satisfied;
Fer the world is full of roses, and the roses full of
dew,

And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips fer
me and you.





A DREAM OF AUTUMN

MELLOW hazes, lowly trailing
Over wood and meadow, veiling
Somber skies, with wild fowl sailing
Sailor-like to foreign lands;
And the north wind overleaping
Summer's brink, and flood-like sweeping
Wrecks of roses where the weeping-
Willows wring their helpless hands.

A DREAM OF AUTUMN

Flared, like Titan torches flinging
Flakes of flame and embers, springing
From the vale, the trees stand swinging
 In the moaning atmosphere;
While in dead'ning lands the lowing
Of the cattle, sadder growing,
Fills the sense to overflowing
 With the sorrow of the year.

Sorrowfully, yet the sweeter
Sings the brook in rippled meter
Under boughs that lithely teeter
 Lorn birds, answering from the shores
Through the viny, shady-shiny
Interspaces, shot with tiny
Flying motes that fleck the winy
 Wave-engraven sycamores.

Fields of ragged stubble, wrangled
With rank weeds, and shocks of tangled
Corn, with crests like rent plumes dangled
 Over Harvest's battle-plain;

A DREAM OF AUTUMN

And the sudden whir and whistle
Of the quail that, like a missile,
Whizzes over thorn and thistle,
And, a missile, drops again.

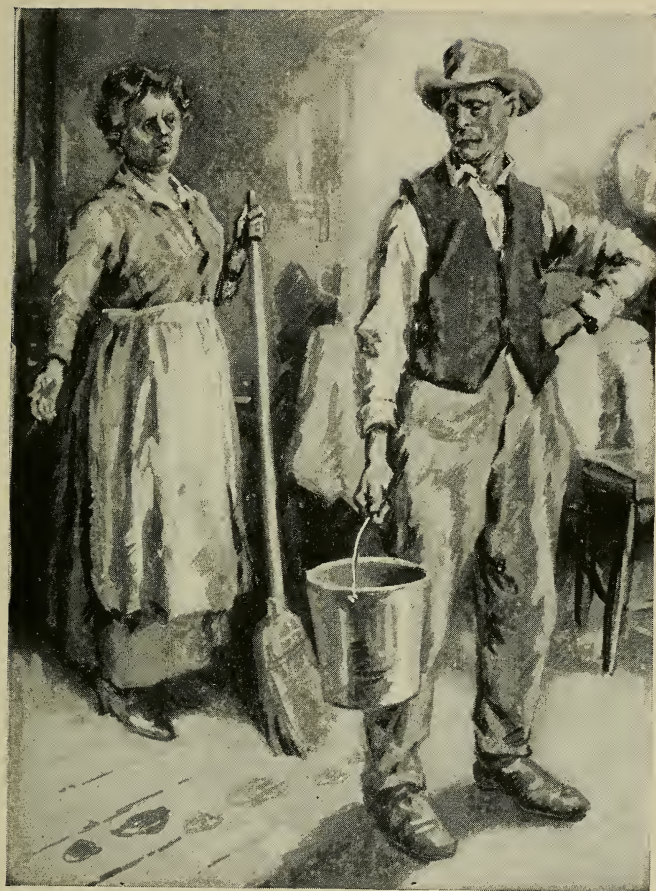
Muffled voices, hid in thickets
Where the redbird stops to stick its
Ruddy beak betwixt the pickets
Of the truant's rustic trap;
And the sound of laughter ringing
Where, within the wild vine swinging,
Climb Bacchante's schoolmates, flinging
Purple clusters in her lap.

Rich as wine, the sunset flashes
Round the tilted world, and dashes
Up the sloping West, and splashes
Red foam over sky and sea—
Till my dream of Autumn, paling
In the splendor all-prevailing,
Like a sallow leaf goes sailing
Down the silence solemnly.



“MYLO JONES’S WIFE”

“MYLO JONES’S wife” was all
I heerd, mighty near, last Fall—
Visitun relations down
T’other side of Morgantown!
Mylo Jones’s wife she does
This and that, and “those” and “thus”—
Can’t ’bide babies in her sight—
Ner no childern, day and night,
Whoopin’ round the premises—
Ner no nothin’ else, I guess!



“MYLO JONES’S WIFE”

Mylo Jones’s wife she ’lows
She’s the boss of her own house!—
Mylo—consequences is—
Stays whare things seem *some* like *his*,—
Uses, mostly, with the stock—
Coaxin’ “Old Kate” not to balk,
Ner kick hoss-flies’ branes out, ner
Act, I s’pose, so much like *her*!
Yit the wimmern-folks tells you
She’s *perfection*.—Yes they do!

Mylo’s wife she says she’s found
Home hain’t home with *men-folks* round
When they’s work like *hern to do*—
Picklin’ pears and *butchern*, too,
And a-rendern lard, and then
Cookin’ fer a pack of men
To come trackin’ up the flore
She’s scrubbed *tel* she’ll scrub no *more*!—
Yit she’d keep things clean ef they
Made her scrub tel Judgmunt Day!

Mylo Jones’s wife she sews
Carpet-rags and patches clothes

"MYLO JONES'S WIFE"

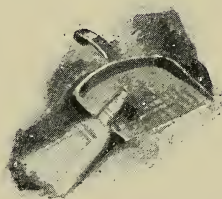
Jest year *in* and *out*!—and yit
Whare's the livin' use of it?
She asts Mylo that.—And he
Gits back whare he'd ruther be,
With his team;—jest *plows*—and don't
Never sware—like some folks won't!
Think ef *he'd cut loose*, I gum!
'D he'p his heavenly chances some!

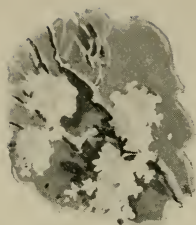
Mylo's wife don't see no use,
Ner no reason ner excuse
Fer his pore relations to
Hang round like they allus do!
Thare 'bout onc't a year—and *she*—
She jest *ga'nts* 'em, folks tells me,
On spiced pears!—Pass Mylo one,
He says "No, he don't chuse none!"
Workin'men like Mylo they
'D ort to have *meat* ev'ry day!

Dad-burn Mylo Jones's wife!
Ruther rake a blame caseknife
'Crost my wizzen than to see
Sich a womern rulin' *me*!—

“MYLO JONES’S WIFE”

Ruther take and turn in and
Raise a fool mule-colt by hand!
Mylo, though—od-rot the man!—
Jest keeps ca’m—like some folks *can*—
And ’lows sich as her, I s’pose,
Is *Man’s he’pmeet!*—Mercy knows!





THE ORCHARD LANDS OF LONG AGO

THE orchard lands of Long Ago!
O drowsy winds, awake, and blow
The snowy blossoms back to me,
And all the buds that used to be!
Blow back along the grassy ways
Of truant feet, and lift the haze
Of happy summer from the trees
That trail their tresses in the seas
Of grain that float and overflow
The orchard lands of Long Ago!



THE ORCHARD LANDS OF LONG AGO

Blow back the melody that slips
In lazy laughter from the lips
That marvel much if any kiss
Is sweeter than the apple's is.
Blow back the twitter of the birds—
The lisp, the titter, and the words
Of merriment that found the shine
Of summer-time a glorious wine
That drenched the leaves that loved it so,
In orchard lands of Long Ago!

O memory! alight and sing
Where rosy-bellied pippins cling,
And golden russets glint and gleam,
As, in the old Arabian dream,
The fruits of that enchanted tree
The glad Aladdin robbed for me!
And, drowsy winds, awake and fan
My blood as when it overran
A heart ripe as the apples grow
In orchard lands of Long Ago!

“TRADIN’ JOE”

I’M one o’ these cur’ous kind o’ chaps
You think you know when you don’t, perhaps!
I hain’t no fool—ner I don’t p’tend
To be so smart I could rickommend
Myself fer a *congerssman*, my friend!—
But I’m kind o’ betwixt-and-between, you know,—
One o’ these fellers ’at folks call “slow.”
And I’ll say jest here I’m kind o’ queer
Regardin’ things ’at I *see* and *hear*,—
Fer I’m *thick* o’ hearin’ *sometimes*, and
It’s hard to git me to understand;
But other times it hain’t, you bet!
Fer I don’t sleep with both eyes shet!

I’ve swapped a power in stock, and so
The neighbors calls me “Tradin’ Joe”—
And I’m goin’ to tell you ’bout a trade,—
And one o’ the best I ever made:

"TRADIN' JOE"

Folks has gone so fur's to say
'At I'm well fixed, in a *worldly* way,
And *bein'* so, and a *widower*,
It's not su'prisin', as you'll infer,
I'm purty handy among the sect—
Widders, especially, rickollect!
And I won't deny that along o' late
I've hankered a heap fer the married state—
But some way o' 'nother the longer we wait
The harder it is to discover a mate.

Marshall Thomas,—a friend o' mine,
Doin' some in the tradin' line,
But a'most too *young* to know it all—
On'y at *picnics* er some *ball*!—
Says to me, in a banterin' way,
As we was a-loadin' stock one day,—
"You're a-huntin' a wife, and I want you to see
My girl's mother, at Kankakee!—
She hain't over forty—good-lookin' and spry,
And jest the woman to fill your eye!
And I'm a-goin' there Sund'y,—and now," says he,
"I want to take you along with *me*;
And you marry *her*, and," he says, "by 'shaw!
You'll hev me fer yer son-in-law!"

“TRADIN’ JOE”

I studied a while, and says I, “Well, I’ll
First have to see ef she suits my style;
And ef she does, you kin bet your life
Your mother-in-law will be my wife!”
Well, Sund’y come; and I fixed up some—
Putt on a collar—I did, by gum!—
Got down my “plug,” and my satin vest—
(You wouldn’t know me to see me dressed!—
But any one knows ef you got the clothes
You kin go in the crowd wher’ the best of ’em goes!)
And I greeced my boots, and combed my hair
Keerfully over the bald place there;
And Marshall Thomas and me that day,
Eat our dinners with Widder Gray
And her girl Han’! . . .

Well, jest a glance
O’ the widder’s smilin’ countenance,
A-cuttin’ up chicken and big pot-pies,
Would make a man hungry in Paradise!
And passin’ p’serves and jelly and cake
’At would make an *angel’s* appetite *ache*!—
Pourin’ out coffee as yaller as gold—
Twic’t as much as the cup could hold—



“TRADIN’ JOE”

La! it was rich!—And then she’d say,
“Take some o’ *this!*” in her coaxin’ way,
Tell ef I’d been a hoss I’d ‘a’ *founded*, shore,
And jest dropped dead on her white-oak floor!
Well, the way I talked would ‘a’ done you good,
Ef you’d been there to ‘a’ understood;
Tel I noticed Hanner and Marshall, they
Was a-noticin’ me in a cur’ous way;
So I says to myse’f, says I, “Now, Joe,
The best thing fer you is to jest go slow!”
And I simmered down, and let them do
The bulk o’ the talkin’ the evening through.
And Marshall was still in a talkative gait
When he left, that evening—tolable late.
“How do you like her?” he says to me;
Says I, “She suits, to a ‘t-y-Tee!’”
And then I ast how matters stood
With him in the *opposite* neighborhood?
“Bully!” he says; “I ruther guess
I’ll finally git her to say the ‘yes.’
I named it to her to-night, and she
Kind o’ smiled, and said ‘*she’d see*’—
And that’s a purty good sign!” says he:
“Yes,” says I, “you’re ahead o’ *me!*”

“TRADIN’ JOE”

And then he laughed, and said, “*Go in!*”
And patted me on the shoulder ag’in.
Well, ever sense then I’ve been ridin’ a good
Deal through the Kankakee neighborhood;
And I make it convenient sometimes to stop
And hitch a few minutes, and kind o’ drop
In at the widder’s, and talk o’ the crop
And one thing o’ ’nother. And week afore last
The notion struck me, as I drove past,
I’d stop at the place and state my case—
Might as well do it at first as last!

I felt first-rate; so I hitched at the gate,
And went up to the house; and, strange to relate,
Marshall Thomas had dropped in, *too*.—
“Glad to see you, sir, how do you do?”
He says, says he! Well—it *sounded queer*;
And when Han’ told me to take a cheer,
Marshall got up and putt out o’ the room—
And motioned his hand fer the *widder* to come.
I didn’t say nothin’ fer quite a spell,
But thinks I to myse’f, “There’s a dog in the well!”
And Han’ *she* smiled so cur’ous at me—
Says I, “What’s up?” And she says, says she,

"TRADIN' JOE"

"Marshall's been at me to marry ag'in,
And I told him 'no,' jest as you come in."
Well, somepin' o' 'nother in that girl's voice
Says to me, "Joseph, here's your choice!"
And another minute her guileless breast
Was lovin'ly throbbin' ag'in' my vest!—
And then I kissed her, and heerd a smack
Come like a' echo a-flutterin' back,
And we looked around, and in full view
Marshall was kissin' the widder, too!
Well, we all of us laughed, in our glad su'prise,
Tel the tears come *a-streamin'* out of our eyes!
And when Marsh said "'Twas the squarest trade
That ever me and him had made,"
We both shuck hands, 'y jucks! and swore
We'd stick together ferevermore.
And old Squire Chipman tuck us the trip:
And Marshall and me's in pardnership!

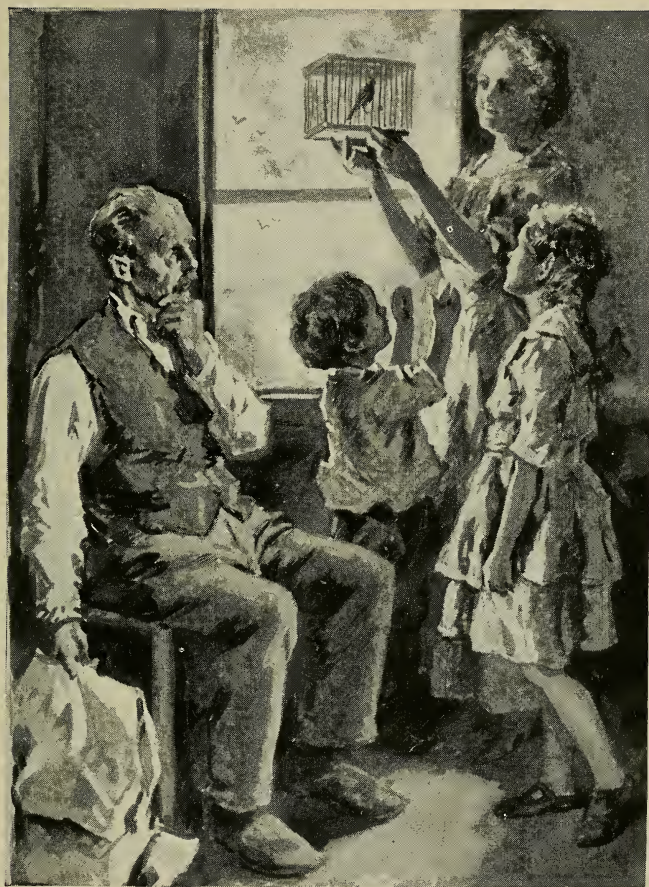


A CANARY AT THE FARM

FOLKS has be'n to town, and Sahry
Fetched 'er home a pet canary,—
And of all the blame', contrary,
Aggervatin' things alive!
I love music—that's I love it
When it's *free*—and plenty of it;—
But I kindo' git above it,
At a dollar-eighty-five!

Reason's plain as I'm a-sayin',—
Jes' the idy, now, o' layin'
Out yer money, and a-payin'
Fer a willer-cage and bird,
When the medder-larks is wingin'
Round you, and the woods is ringin'
With the beautifullest singin'
That a mortal ever heard!

Sahry's sot, tho'.—So I tell her
He's a purty little feller,
With his wings o' creamy-yeller,
And his eyes keen as a cat;
And the twitter o' the critter
'Pears to absolutely glitter!
Guess I'll haf to go and git her
A high-priceter cage 'n that!





UNCLE DAN'L IN TOWN OVER SUNDAY

I CAN'T git used to city ways—
Ner never could, I' bet my hat!
Jevver know jes' whur I was raised?—
Raised on a farm! D' ever tell you that?
Was undoubtatly, I declare!
And now, on Sunday—fun to spare
Around a farm! Why, jes' to set
Up on the top three-cornered rail
Of Pap's ole place, nigh La Fayette,
I'd swap my soul off, hide and tail!

UNCLE DAN'L IN TOWN OVER SUNDAY

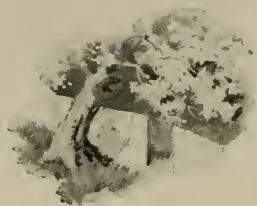
You fellers in the city here,
You don't know nothin'!—S'pose to-day,
This clatterin' Sunday, you waked up
Without no jinglin'-janglin' bells,
Ner rattlin' of the milkman's cup,
Ner any swarm of screechin' birds
Like these here English swallers—S'pose
Ut you could miss all noise like those,
And git shet o' thinkin' of 'em afterwerds,
And then, in the country, wake and hear
Nothin' but silence—wake and see
Nothin' but green woods fur and near?—
What sort o' Sunday would that be? . . .
Wisht I hed you home with me!

Now think! The laziest of all days—
To git up any time—er sleep—
Er jes' lay round and watch the haze
A-dancin' 'crost the wheat, and keep
My pipe a-goern laisurely,
And puff and whiff as pleases me—
And ef I leave a trail of smoke
Clean through the house, no one to say,
“Wah! throw that nasty thing away;
Hev some regyard fer decency!”

UNCLE DAN'L IN TOWN OVER SUNDAY

To walk round barefoot, if you choose;
Er saw the fiddle—er dig some bait
And go a-fishin'—er pitch hoss shoes
Out in the shade somewhurs, and wait
For dinner-time, with an appetite
Ut folks in town cain't equal quite!
To laze around the barn and poke
Fer hens' nests—er git up a match
Betwixt the boys, and watch 'em scratch
And rassle round, and sweat and swear
And quarrel to their hearts' content;
And me a-jes' a-settin' there
A-hatchin' out more devilment!
What sort o' Sunday would that be? . . .
Wisht I hed you home with me!





WHERE THE CHILDREN USED TO PLAY

THE old farm-home is Mother's yet and mine,
And filled it is with plenty and to spare,—
But we are lonely here in life's decline,
Though fortune smiles around us everywhere:
We look across the gold
Of the harvests, as of old—
The corn, the fragrant clover, and the hay:
But most we turn our gaze,
As with eyes of other days,
To the orchard where the children used to play.



WHERE THE CHILDREN USED TO PLAY

*O from our life's full measure
And rich hoard of worldly treasure
We often turn our weary eyes away,
And hand in hand we wander
Down the old path winding yonder
To the orchard where the children used to play.*

Our sloping pasture-lands are filled with herbs;
The barn and granary-bins are bulging o'er:
The grove's a paradise of singing birds—
The woodland brook leaps laughing by the door;
Yet lonely, lonely still,
Let us prosper as we will,
Our old hearts seem so empty everyway—
We can only through a mist
See the faces we have kissed
In the orchard where the children used to play.

*O from our life's full measure
And rich hoard of worldly treasure
We often turn our weary eyes away,
And hand in hand we wander
Down the old path winding yonder
To the orchard where the children used to play.*



GRIGGSBY'S STATION

PAP'S got his pattend-right, and rich as all
creation;

But where's the peace and comfort that we all
had before?

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—

Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

The likes of us a-livin' here! It's jest a mortal pity
To see us in this great big house, with cyarpets on
the stairs,

And the pump right in the kitchen! And the city!
city! city!—

And nothin' but the city all around us ever'wheres!

GRIGGSBY'S STATION

Climb clean above the roof and look from the steeple,
And never see a robin, nor a beech or ellum tree!
And right here in ear-shot of at least a thousan'
people,
And none that neighbors with us or we want to go
and see!

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—
Back where the latch-string's a-hangin' from the
door,
And ever' neighbor round the place is dear as a
relation—
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see the Wiggenses, the whole kit-and-bilin',
A-drivin' up from Shallor Ford to stay the Sunday
through;
And I want to see 'em hitchin' at their son-in-law's
and pilin'
Out there at 'Lizy Ellen's like they ust to do!

I want to see the piece-quilts the Jones girls is
makin';
And I want to pester Laury 'bout their freckled
hired hand,

GRIGGSBY'S STATION

And joke her 'bout the widower she come purt' nigh
a-takin',

Till her Pap got his pension 'lowed in time to save
his land.

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—

Back where they's nothin' aggervatin' any more,
Shet away safe in the woods around the old
location—

Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see Marindy and he'p her with her sewin',
And hear her talk so lovin' of her man that's dead
and gone,

And stand up with Emanuel to show me how he's
growin',

And smile as I have saw her 'fore she putt her
mournin' on.

And I want to see the Samples, on the old lower
eighty,

When John, our oldest boy, he was tuk and
burried—for

His own sake and Katy's,—and I want to cry with
Katy

As she reads all his letters over, writ from The
War.



GRIGGSBY'S STATION

What's in all this grand life and high situation,
And nary pink nor hollyhawk a-bloomin' at the
door?—

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!





US FARMERS IN THE COUNTRY

US farmers in the country, as the seasons go and
come,
Is purty much like other folks,—we're apt to grumble
some!
The Spring's too back'ard fer us, er to for'ard—ary
one—
We'll jaw about it anyhow, and have our way er
none!
The thaw's set in too suddent; er frost's stayed in
the soil
Too long to give the wheat a chance, and crops is
bound to spoil!
The weather's eether most too mild, er too outrage-
ous rough,
And altogether too much rain, er not half rain
enough!

US FARMERS IN THE COUNTRY

Now what I'd like and what you'd like is plane enough
to see:

It's jest to have old Providence drop round on you
and me

And ast us what our views is first, regardin' shine
er rain,

And post 'em when to shet her off, er let her on
again!

And yit I'd ruther, after all—consider'n' other chores
I' got on hands, a-tendin' both to my affares and
yours—

I'd ruther miss the blame I'd git, a-rulin' things up
thare,

And spend my extry time in praise and gratitude
and prayer.

AT "THE LITERARY"

FOLKS in town, I reckon, thinks
They git all the fun they air
Runnin' loose 'round!—but, 'y jinks!
We' got fun, and fun to spare,
Right out here amongst the ash
And oak timber ever'where!
Some folks else kin cut a dash
'Sides town-people, don't fergit!—
'Specially in *winter*-time,
When they's snow, and roads is fit.
In them circumstances I'm
Resig-nated to my lot—
Which putts me in mind o' what
 'S called "The Literary."

Us folks in the country sees
Lots o' fun!—Take spellin'-school;
Er ole hoe-down jamborees;
Er revivals; er ef you'll
Tackle taffy-pullin's you
Kin git fun, and quite a few!—
Same with huskin's. But all these

AT "THE LITERARY"

Kind o' frolics they hain't new
By a hunderd year' er two
Cipher on it as you please!
But I'll tell you what I jest
Think walks over all the rest—
Anyway it suits *me* best,—
That's "The Literary."

First they started it—" 'y gee!"
Thinks-says-I, "this settle-ment
'S gittin' too high-toned fer me!"
But when all begin to jine,
And I heerd *Izory* went,
I jest kind o' drapped in line,
Like you've seen some sandy, thin,
Scrawny shoat putt fer the crick
Down some pig-trail through the thick
Spice-bresh, where the whole drove's been
'Bout six weeks 'fore he gits in!—
"Can't tell nothin'," I-says-ee,
"'Bout it tel you go and see
Their blame 'Literary'!"

AT "THE LITERARY"

Very first night I was there
I was 'p'inted to be what
They call "Critic"—so's a fair
And square jedgment could be got
On the pieces 'at was read,
And on the debate,—“Which air
Most destructive element,
Fire er worter?” Then they hed
Compositions on “Content,”
“Death,” and “Botany”; and Tomps
He read one on “Dreenin' Swamps”
I p'nounced the boss, and said,
“So fur, 'at's the best thing read
In yer 'Literary'!”

Then they *sung* some—tel I called
Order, and got back ag'in
In the critic's cheer, and hauled
All o' the p'formers in:—
Mandy Brizendine read one
I fergit; and Doc's was “Thought”;
And Sarepty's, hern was “None
Air Denied 'at Knocks”; and Daut—



AT "THE LITERARY"

Fayette Strawnse's little niece—
She got up and spoke a piece:
Then Izory she read hern—
"Best thing in the whole concern,"
I-says-ee; "now le' 's adjourn
This-here 'Literary'!"

They was some contendin'—yit
We broke up in harmony.
Road outside as white as grit,
And as slick as slick could be!—
I'd fetched 'Zory in my sleigh,—
And I had a heap to say,
Drivin' back—in fact, I driv
'Way around the old north way,
Where the Daubenspeckses live.
'Zory allus—'fore that night—
Never 'peared to feel jest right
In my company.—You see,
On'y thing on earth saved me
Was that "Literary"!

WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING

THERE wasn't two purtier farms in the state
Than the couple of which I'm about to relate;—
Jinin' each other—belongin' to Brown,
And jest at the edge of a flourishin' town.
Brown was a man, as I understand,
That allus had handled a good 'eal o' land,
And was sharp as a tack in drivin' a trade—
For that's the way most of his money was made.
And all the grounds and the orchards about
His two pet farms was all tricked out
With poppies and posies
And sweet-smellin' rosies;
And hundreds o' kinds
Of all sorts o' vines,
To tickle the most horticultural minds;
And little dwarf trees not as thick as your wrist
With ripe apples on 'em as big as your fist:
And peaches,—Siberian crabs and pears,
And quinces—Well! *any* fruit *any* tree bears;
And the purtiest stream—jest a-swimmin' with fish,
And—*jest a'most everything heart could wish!*

WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING

The purtiest orch'rds—I wish you could see
How purty they was, for I know it 'ud be
A regular treat!—but I'll go ahead with
My story! A man by the name o' Smith—
(A bad name to rhyme,
But I reckon that I'm
Not goin' back on a Smith! nary time!)
'At hadn't soul of kin nor kith,
And more money than he knowed what to do with,—
So he comes a-ridin' along one day,
And *he* says to Brown, in his offhand way—
Who was trainin' some newfangled vines round a bay-
Winder—"Howdy-do—look-a-here—say:
What'll you take for this property here?—
I'm talkin' o' leavin' the city this year,
And I want to be
Where the air is free,
And I'll *buy* this place, if it ain't too dear!"—
Well—they grumbled and jawed aroun'—
"I don't like to part with the place," says Brown;
"Well," says Smith, a-jerkin' his head,
"That house yonder—bricks painted red—
Jest like this'n—a *purtier view*—
Who is it owns *it*?" "That's mine too,"

WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING

Says Brown, as he winked at a hole in his shoe,
“But I’ll tell you right here jest what I *kin* do:—
If you’ll pay the figgers I’ll sell *it* to you.”
Smith went over and looked at the place—
Badgered with Brown, and argied the case—
Thought that Brown’s figgers was rather too tall,
But, findin’ that Brown wasn’t goin’ to fall,
In final agreed,
So they drawed up the deed
For the farm and the fixtures—the live stock an’ all.
And so Smith moved from the city as soon
As he possibly could—But “the man in the moon”
Knowed more’n Smith o’ farmin’ pursuits,
And jest to convince you, and have no disputes,
How little he knowed,
I’ll tell you his “mode,”
As he called it, o’ raisin’ “the best that growed,”
In the way o’ potatoes—
Cucumbers—tomatoes,
And squashes as lengthy as young alligators.
’Twas allus a curious thing to me
How big a fool a feller kin be
When he gits on a farm after leavin’ a town!—
Expectin’ to raise himself up to renown,



WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING

And reap for himself agricultural fame,
By growin' of squashes—*without any shame*—
As useless and long as a technical name.
To make the soil pure
And certainly sure,
He plastered the ground with patent manure.
He had cultivators, and double-hoss plows,
And patent machines for milkin' his cows;
And patent hay-forks—patent measures and weights,
And new patent back-action hinges for gates,
And barn locks and latches, and such little dribs,
And patents to keep the rats out o' the cribs—
Reapers and mowers,
And patent grain sowers;
And drillers
And tillers
And cucumber hillers,
And harriers;—and had patent rollers and scrapers,
And took about ten agricultural papers.
So you can imagine how matters turned out:
But *Brown* didn't have not a shadder o' doubt
That Smith didn't know what he was about
When he said that "the *old* way to farm was played
out."

WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING

But Smith worked ahead,
And when any one said
That the *old* way o' workin' was better instead
O' his "modern idees," he allus turned red,
And wanted to know
What made people so
Infernally anxious to hear theirselves crow?
And guessed that he'd manage to hoe his own row.
Brown he come onc't and leant over the fence,
And told Smith that he couldn't see any sense
In goin' to such a tremendous expense
For the sake o' such no-account experiments:—
"That'll never make corn!
As shore's you're born
It'll come out the leetlest end of the horn!"
Says Brown, as he pulled off a big roastin'-ear
From a stalk of his own
That had tribble outgrown
Smith's poor yaller shoots, and says he, "Looky here!
This corn was raised in the old-fashioned way,
And I rather imagine that *this* corn'll pay
Expenses fer *raisin'* it!—What do you say?"
Brown got him then to look over his crop.—
His luck that season had been tip-top!

WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING

Traded with him an', workin' it cute,
Raked in two thousand dollars to boot
As slick as a whistle, an' that wasn't all,—
He managed to trade back again the next fall,—
And the next—and the next—as long as Smith
 stayed

He reaped with his harvests an annual trade.—
Why, I reckon that Brown must 'a' easily made—
On an *average*—nearly two thousand a year—
Together he made over seven thousand—clear.—
Till Mr. Smith found he was losin' his health
In as big a proportion, almost, as his wealth;
So at last he concluded to move back to town,
And sold back his farm to this same Mr. Brown
At very low figgers, by gittin' it down.
Further'n this I have nothin' to say
Than merely advisin' the Smiths fer to stay
In their grocery stores in flourishin' towns
And leave agriculture alone—and the Browns.





KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

I

TELL you what I like the best—
'Long about knee-deep in June,
'Bout the time strawberries melts
On the vine,—some afternoon
Like to jes' git out and rest,
And not work at nothin' else!

KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

II

Orchard's where I'd ruther be—
Needn't fence it in fer me!—

Jes' the whole sky overhead,
And the whole airth underneath—
Sorto' so's a man kin breathe

Like he ort, and kindo' has
Elbow-room to keerlessly

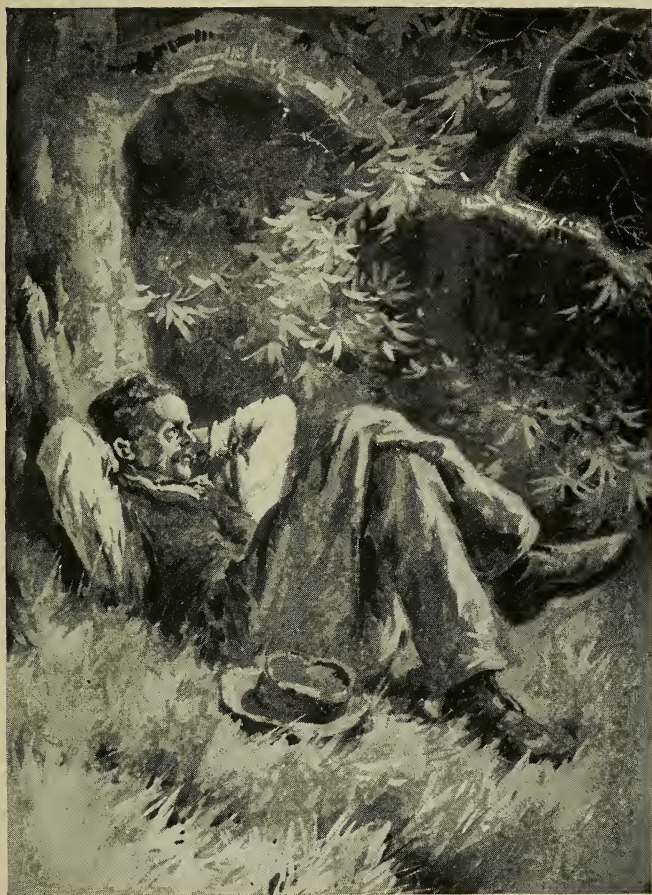
Sprawl out len'thways on the grass
Where the shadders thick and soft
As the kivvers on the bed
Mother fixes in the loft
Allus, when they's company!

III

Jes' a-sorto' lazin' there—

S'lazy, 'at you peek and peer
Through the wavin' leaves above,
Like a feller 'at's in love

And don't know it, ner don't keer!
Ever'thing you hear and see
Got some sort o' interest—
Maybe find a bluebird's nest



KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

Tucked up there conveniently
Fer the boy 'at's ap' to be
Up some other apple-tree!
Watch the swallers skootin' past
'Bout as peert as you could ast;
Er the Bob-white raise and whiz
Where some other's whistle is.

IV

Ketch a shadder down below,
And look up to find the crow—
Er a hawk,—away up there,
'Pearantly *froze* in the air!—
Hear the old hen squawk, and squat
Over ever' chick she's got,
Suddent-like!—and she knows where
That-air hawk is, well as you! —
You jes' bet your life she do!—
Eyes a-glitterin' like glass,
Waitin' till he makes a pass!

V

Pee-wees' singin', to express
My opinion, 's second class,

KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

Yit you'll hear 'em more er less;
Sapsucks gittin' down to biz,
Weedin' out the lonesomeness;
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,
In them base-ball clothes o' his,
Sportin' round the orchard jes'
Like he owned the premises!
Sun out in the fields kin sizz,
But flat on yer back, I guess,
In the shade's where glory is!
That's jes' what I'd like to do
Stiddy fer a year er two!

VI

Plague! ef they ain't somepin' in
Work 'at kindo' goes ag'in'
My convictions!—'long about
Here in June especially!—
Under some old apple-tree,
Jes' a-restin' through and through,
I could git along without
Nothin' else at all to do
Only jes' a-wishin' you

KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

Wuz a-gittin' there like me,
And June was eternity!

VII

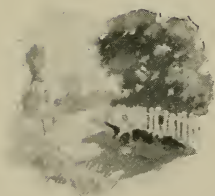
Lay out there and try to see
Jes' how lazy you kin be!—
 Tumble round and souse yer head
In the clover-bloom, er pull
 Yer straw hat acrost yer eyes
 And peek through it at the skies,
 Thinkin' of old chums 'at's dead,
 Maybe, smilin' back at you
In betwixt the beautiful
 Clouds o' gold and white and blue.—
Month a man kin raily love—
June, you know, I'm talkin' of!

VIII

March ain't never nothin' new!—
Aprile's altogether too
 Brash fer me! and May—I jes'
 'Bominate its promises,—
Little hints o' sunshine and
Green around the timber-land—

KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

A few blossoms, and a few
Chip-birds, and a sprout er two,—
Drap asleep, and it turns in
'Fore daylight and *snows* ag'in!—
But when *June* comes—Clear my th' oat
With wild honey!—Rench my hair
In the dew! and hold my coat!
Whoop out loud! and th'ow my hat!—
June wants me, and I'm to spare!
Spread them shadders anywhere,
I'll git down and waller there,
And obleeged to you at that!





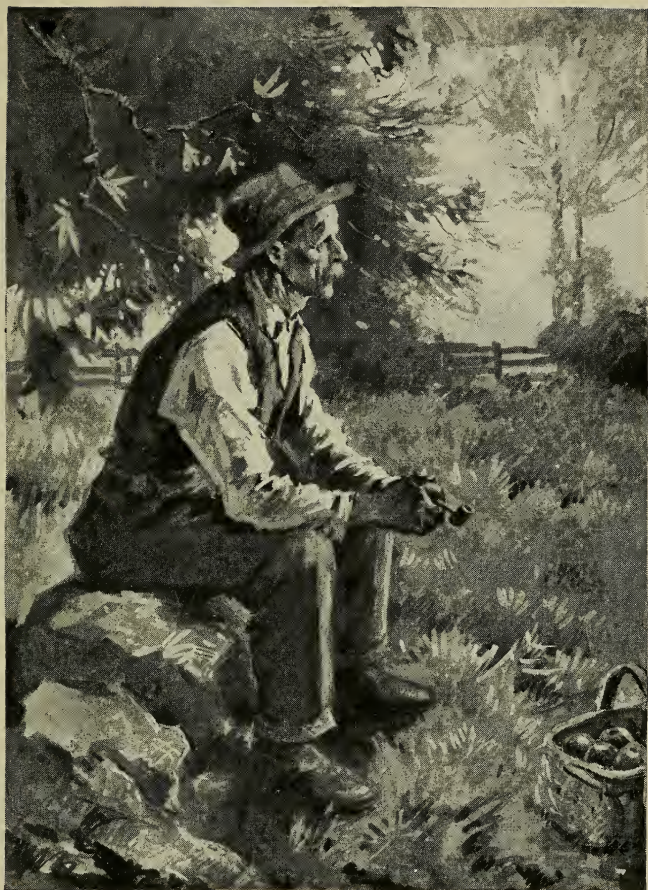
OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM

I HAVE jest about decided
It 'ud keep a *town-boy* hoppin'
Fer to work all winter, choppin'
Fer a' old fireplace, like *I* did!
Lawz! them old times wuz contrairy!—
Blame' backbone o' winter, 'peared-like
Wouldn't break!—and I wuz skeered-like
Clean on into *Feb'uary*!
Nothin' ever made me madder
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'
In a' extra forestick, sayin',
“Groun'-hog's out and seed his shadder!”



OLD OCTOBER

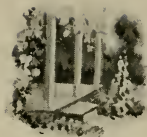
OLD October's purt' nigh gone,
And the frosts is comin' on
Little *heavier* every day—
Like our hearts is thataway!
Leaves is changin' overhead
Back from green to gray and red,
Brown and yellor, with their stems
Loosenin' on the oaks and e'ms;
And the balance of the trees
Gittin' balder every breeze—
Like the heads we're scratchin' on!
Old October's purt' nigh gone.



OLD OCTOBER

I love Old October so,
I can't bear to see her go—
Seems to me like losin' some
Old-home relative er chum—
'Pears like sorto' settin' by
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh
Was a-passin' out o' sight
Into everlastin' night!
Hickernuts a feller hears
Rattlin' down is more like tears
Drappin' on the leaves below—
I love Old October so!

Can't tell what it is about
Old October knocks me out!—
I sleep well enough at night—
And the blamedest appetite
Ever mortal man possessed,—
Last thing et, it tastes the best!—
Warnuts, butternuts, pawpaws,
'Iles and limbers up my jaws
Fer raal service, sich as new
Pork, spareribs, and sausage, too.—
Yit, fer all, they's somepin' 'bout
Old October knocks me out!



OLD-FASHIONED ROSES

THEY ain't no style about 'em,
And they're sorto' pale and faded,
Yit the doorway here, without 'em,
Would be lonesomer, and shaded
With a good 'eal blacker shadder
Than the morning-glories makes,
And the sunshine would look sadder
Fer their good old-fashion' sakes.

I like 'em 'cause they kindo'-
Sorto' *make* a feller like 'em!
And I tell you, when I find a
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,



OLD-FASHIONED ROSES

It allus sets me thinkin'
O' the ones 'at used to grow
And peek in thro' the chinkin'
O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,
And how she ust to love 'em—
When they wuzn't any other,
'Less she found 'em up above 'em!
And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,
Whispered with a smile and said
We must pick a bunch and putt 'em
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz a-sayin',
They ain't no style about 'em
Very gaudy er displayin',
But I wouldn't be without 'em,—
'Cause I'm happier in these posies,
And the hollyhawks and sich,
Than the hummin'-bird 'at noses
In the roses of the rich.



HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

NOBODY on the old farm here but Mother, me
and John,

Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time
comes on,—

And *then*, I want to say to you, we *needed* he'p
about,

As you'd admit, ef you'd a-seen the way the crops
turned out!

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

A better quarter-section ner a richer soil warn't
found

Than this-here old home place o' oun fer fifty miles
around!—

The house was small—but plenty-big we found it
from the day

That John—our only livin' son—packed up and went
away.

You see, we tuk sich pride in John—his mother
more'n me—

That's natchurul; but *both* of us was proud as proud
could be;

Fer the boy, from a little chap, was most oncommon
bright,

And seemed in work as well as play to take the same
delight.

He allus went a-whistlin' round the place, as glad at
heart

As robins up at five o'clock to git an airly start;
And many a time 'fore daylight Mother's waked me
up to say—

“Jest listen, David!—listen!—Johnny's beat the
birds to-day!”

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

High-sperited from boyhood, with a most inquirin'
turn,—

He wanted to learn ever'thing on earth they was to
learn;

He'd ast more plaguy questions in a mortal-minute
here

Than his grandpap in Paradise could answer in a
year!

And *read!* w'y, his own mother learnt him how to
read and spell;

And "The Childern of the Abbey"—w'y, he knowed
that book as well

At fifteen as his parents!—and "The Pilgrim's Prog-
ress," too—

Jest knuckled down, the shaver did, and read 'em
through and through!

At eighteen, Mother 'lowed the boy must have a
better chance—

That we ort to educate him, under any circumstance;
And John he j'ined his mother, and they ding-donged
and kep' on,

Tel I sent him off to school in town, half glad that
he was gone.

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

But—I missed him—w’y, of course I did!—The Fall
and Winter through
I never built the kitchen-fire, er split a stick in two,
Er fed the stock, er butchered, er swung up a gambrel-pin,
But what I thought o’ John, and wished that he was
home ag’in.

He’d come, sometimes—on Sund’ys most—and stay
the Sund’y out;
And on Thanksgivin’-Day he ’peared to like to be
about:
But a change was workin’ on him—he was stiller
than before,
And didn’t joke, ner laugh, ner sing and whistle any
more.

And his talk was all so proper; and I noticed, with
a sigh,
He was tryin’ to raise side-whiskers, and had on a
stripèd tie,
And a standin’-collar, ironed up as stiff and slick as
bone;
And a breast-pin, and a watch and chain and plug-
hat of his own.

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

But when Spring-weather opened out, and John was
to come home

And he'p me through the season, I was glad to see
him come;

But my happiness, that evening, with the settin' sun
went down,

When he bragged of "a position" that was offered
him in town.

"But," says I, "you'll not accept it?" "W'y, of course
I will," says he.—

"This drudgin' on a farm," he says, "is not the life
fer me;

I've set my stakes up higher," he continued, light
and gay,

"And town's the place fer *me*, and I'm a-goin' right
away!"

And go he did!—his mother clingin' to him at the
gate,

A-pleadin' and a-cryin'; but it hadn't any weight.

I was tranquiller, and told her 'twarn't no use to
worry so,

And onclasped her arms from round his neck round
mine—and let him go!



HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

I felt a little bitter feelin' fooling round about
The aidges of my conscience; but I didn't let it
out;—

I simply retch out, trimbly-like, and tuk the boy's
hand,

And though I didn't say a word, I knowed he'd under-
stand.

And—well!—sence then the old home here was
mighty lonesome, shore!

With me a-workin' in the field and Mother at the
door,

Her face ferever to'rds the town, and fadin' more
and more—

Her only son nine miles away, a-clerkin' in a store!

The weeks and months dragged by us; and some-
times the boy would write

A letter to his mother, sayin' that his work was
light,

And not to feel oneasy about his health a bit—

Though his business was confinin', he was gittin'
used to it.

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

And sometimes he would write and ast how *I* was
gittin' on,
And ef I had to pay out much fer he'p sence he was
gone;
And how the hogs was doin', and the balance of the
stock,
And talk on fer a page er two jest like he used to
talk.

And he wrote, along 'fore harvest, that he guessed
he would git home,
Fer business would, of course, be dull in town.—
But *didn't* come:—
We got a postal later, sayin' when they had no trade
They filled the time "invoicin' goods," and that was
why he stayed.

And then he quit a-writin' altogether: Not a word—
Exceptin' what the neighbors brung who'd been to
town and heard
What store John was clerkin' in, and went round to
inquire
If they could buy their goods there less and sell
their produce higher.

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

And so the Summer faded out, and Autumn wore
away,

And a keener Winter never fetched around Thanks-
givin'-Day!

The night before that day of thanks I'll never quite
fergit,

The wind a-howlin' round the house—it makes me
creepy yit!

And there set me and Mother—me a-twistin' at the
prongs

Of a green scrub-ellum forestick with a vicious pair
of tongs,

And Mother sayin', "*David! David!*" in a' undertone,
As though she thought that I was thinkin' bad-words
unbeknown.

"I've dressed the turkey, David, fer to-morrow,"
Mother said,

A-tryin' to wedge some pleasant subject in my stub-
born head,—

"And the mince-meat I'm a-mixin' is perfection
mighty nigh;

And the pound-cake is delicious-rich—" "Who'll eat
'em?" I-says-I.

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

“The cramberries is drippin’-sweet,” says Mother,
 runnin’ on,
P’tendin’ not to hear me;—“and somehow I thought
 of John
All the time they was a-jellin’—fer you know they
 allus was
His favorite—he likes ’em so!” Says I, “Well, s’pose
 he does?”

“Oh, nothin’ much!” says Mother, with a quiet sort
 o’ smile—
“This gentleman behind my cheer may tell you after
 while!”
And as I turnt and looked around, some one riz up
 and leant
And putt his arms round Mother’s neck, and laughed
 in low content.

“It’s *me*,” he says—“your fool-boy John, come back
 to shake your hand;
Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you
 understand

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

How dearer yit than all the world is this old home
that we
Will spend 'Thanksgivin' in fer life—jest, Mother,
you and me!"

.

Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and
John,
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time
comes on;
And then, I want to say to you, we *need* sich he'p
about,
As you'd admit, ef you could see the way the crops
turn out!





WORTERMELON TIME

OLD wortermelon time is a-comin' round again,
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n
me,

Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can
plainly see.

Oh! it's in the sandy soil wortermelons does the best,
And it's thare they'll lay and waller in the sun-
shine and the dew

Tel they wear all the green streaks off of theyr
breast;

And you bet I ain't a-findin' any fault with them;
air you?

WORTERMELON TIME

They ain't no better thing in the vegetable line;
And they don't need much 'tendin', as ev'ry farmer
knows;
And when theyr ripe and ready fer to pluck from
the vine,
I want to say to you theyr the best fruit that
grows.

It's some likes the yeller-core, and some likes the red,
And it's some says "The Little Californy" is the
best;
But the sweetest slice of all I ever wedged in my
head,
Is the old "Edingburg Mounting-sprout," of the
west.

You don't want no punkins nigh your wortermelon
vines—
'Cause some-way-another, they'll spile your mel-
ons, shore;—
I've seed 'em taste like punkins, from the core to
the rines,
Which may be a fact you have heerd of before.

WORTERMELON TIME

But your melons that's raised right and 'tended to
with care,

You can walk around amongst 'em with a parent's
pride and joy,

And thump 'em on the heads with as fatherly a' air
As ef each of them was your little girl er boy.

I joy in my hart jest to hear that rippin' sound

When you split one down the back and jolt the
halves in two,

And the friends you love the best is gethered all
around—

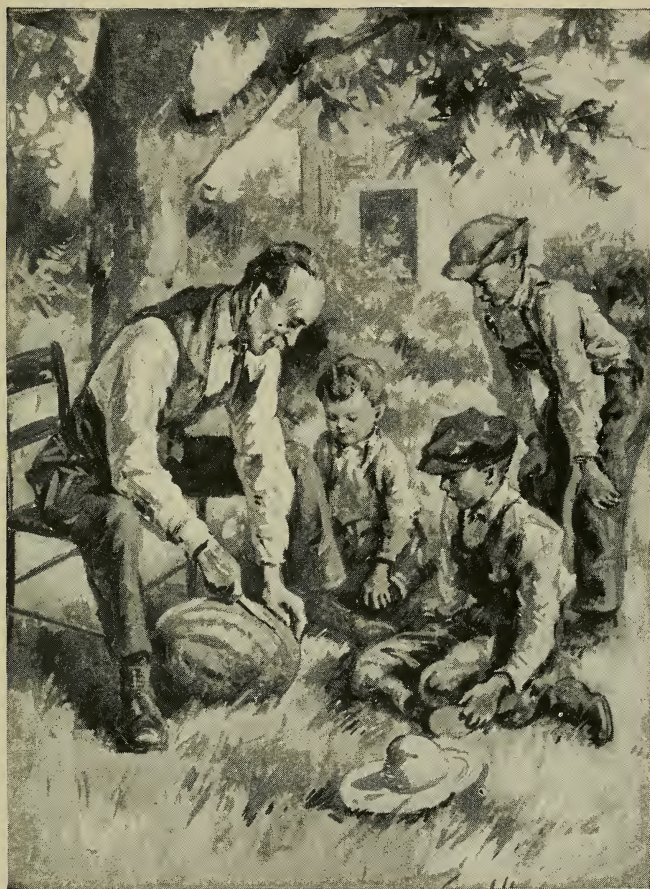
And you says unto your sweethart, "Oh, here's
the core fer you!"

And I like to slice 'em up in big pieces fer 'em all,
Espeshally the childern, and watch theyr high
delight

As one by one the rines with theyr pink notches falls,
And they holler fer some more, with unquenched
appetite.

Boys takes to it natchurl, and I like to see 'em eat—

A slice of wortermelon's like a frenchharp in theyr
hands,



WORTERMELON TIME

And when they "saw" it through theyr mouth sich
music can't be beat—

'Cause it's music both the sperit and the stummick
understands.

Oh, they's more in wortermelons than the purty-
colored meat,

And the overflowin' sweetness of the worter
squshed betwixt

The up'ard and the down'ard motions of a feller's
teeth,

And it's the taste of ripe old age and juicy child-
hood mixed.

Fer I never taste a melon but my thoughts flies away
To the summertime of youth; and again I see the
dawn

And the fadin' afternoon of the long summer day,
And the dusk and dew a-fallin', and the night a-
comin' on.

And thare's the corn around us, and the lispin' leaves
and trees,

And the stars a-peekin' down on us as still as
silver mice,

WORTERMELON TIME

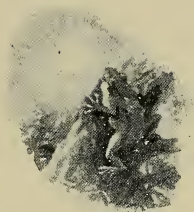
And us boys in the wortermelons on our hands and
knees,

And the new-moon hangin' ore us like a yellercored slice.

Oh! it's wortermelon time is a-comin' round again,

And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n me,
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—

Which is the why and wherefore, as you can
plainly see.



THE TREE-TOAD

'S CUR'OUS-LIKE," said the tree-toad,
 "T've twittered fer rain all day;
And I got up soon,
And hollered tel noon—
But the sun, hit blazed away,
Tel I jest clumb down in a crawfish-hole,
Weary at hart, and sick at soul!

THE TREE-TOAD

“Dozed away fer an hour,
And I tackled the thing ag’in:
And I sung, and sung,
Tel I knowed my lung
Was jest about give in;
And *then*, thinks I, ef hit don’t rain *now*,
They’s nothin’ in singin’, anyhow!

“Onc’t in a while some farmer
Would come a-drivin’ past;
And he’d hear my cry,
And stop and sigh—
Tel I jest laid back, at last,
And I hollered rain tel I thought my th’oat
Would bust wide open at ever’ note!

“But I *fetch*ed her!—O *I fetch*ed her!—
’Cause a little while ago,
As I kindo’ set,
With one eye shet,
And a-singin’ soft and low,
A voice drapped down on my fevered brain,
A-sayin’,—‘*Ef you’ll jest hush I’ll rain!*’”





A COUNTRY PATHWAY

I COME upon it suddenly, alone—

A little pathway winding in the weeds
That fringe the roadside; and with dreams my own,
I wander as it leads.

Full wistfully along the slender way,

Through summer tan of freckled shade and shine,
I take the path that leads me as it may—
Its every choice is mine.

A chipmunk, or a sudden-whirring quail,

Is startled by my step as on I fare—

A garter-snake across the dusty trail

Glances and—is not there.

A COUNTRY PATHWAY

Above the arching jimson-weeds flare twos
And twos of sallow-yellow butterflies,
Like blooms of lorn primrose blowing loose
When autumn winds arise.

The trail dips—dwindles—broadens then, and lifts
Itself astride a cross-road dubiously,
And, from the fennel marge beyond it, drifts
Still onward, beckoning me.

And though it needs must lure me mile on mile
Out of the public highway, still I go,
My thoughts, far in advance in Indian-file,
Allure me even so.

Why, I am as a long-lost boy that went
At dusk to bring the cattle to the bars,
And was not found again, though Heaven lent
His mother all the stars

With which to seek him through that awful night.
O years of nights as vain!—Stars never rise
But well might miss their glitter in the light
Of tears in mother-eyes!



A COUNTRY PATHWAY

So—on, with quickened breaths, I follow still—
My avant-courier must be obeyed!
Thus am I led, and thus the path, at will,
Invites me to invade

A meadow's precincts, where my daring guide
Clambers the steps of an old-fashioned stile,
And stumbles down again, the other side,
To gambol there a while

In pranks of hide-and-seek, as on ahead
I see it running, while the clover-stalks
Shake rosy fists at me, as though they said—
“You dog our country-walks

“And mutilate us with your walking-stick!—
We will not suffer tamely what you do,
And warn you at your peril,—for we'll sic
Our bumblesbees on you!”

But I smile back, in airy nonchalance,—
The more determined on my wayward quest,
As some bright memory a moment dawns
A morning in my breast—

A COUNTRY PATHWAY

Sending a thrill that hurries me along
In faulty similes of childish skips,
Enthused with lithe contortions of a song
Performing on my lips.

In wild meanderings o'er pasture wealth—
Erratic wanderings through dead'ning-lands,
Where sly old brambles, plucking me by stealth,
Put berries in my hands:

Or the path climbs a boulder—wades a slough—
Or, rollicking through buttercups and flags,
Goes gayly dancing o'er a deep bayou
On old tree-trunks and snags:

Or, at the creek, leads o'er a limpid pool
Upon a bridge the stream itself has made,
With some Spring-freshet for the mighty tool
That its foundation laid.

I pause a moment here to bend and muse,
With dreamy eyes, on my reflection, where
A boat-backed bug drifts on a helpless cruise,
Or wildly oars the air,

A COUNTRY PATHWAY

As, dimly seen, the pirate of the brook—

The pike, whose jaunty hulk denotes his speed—
Swings pivoting about, with wary look
Of low and cunning greed.

Till, filled with other thought, I turn again

To where the pathway enters in a realm
Of lordly woodland, under sovereign reign
Of towering oak and elm.

A puritanic quiet here reviles

The almost whispered warble from the hedge,
And takes a locust's rasping voice and files
The silence to an edge.

In such a solitude my sombre way

Strays like a misanthrope within a gloom
Of his own shadows—till the perfect day
Bursts into sudden bloom,

And crowns a long, declining stretch of space,

Where King Corn's armies lie with flags unfurled,
And where the valley's dint in Nature's face
Dimples a smiling world.

A COUNTRY PATHWAY

And lo! through mists that may not be dispelled,
I see an old farm homestead, as in dreams,
Where, like a gem in costly setting held,
The old log cabin gleams.

.

O darling Pathway! lead me bravely on
Adown your valley-way, and run before
Among the roses crowding up the lawn
And thronging at the door,—

And carry up the echo there that shall
Arouse the drowsy dog, that he may bay
The household out to greet the prodigal
That wanders home to-day.





WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE MAY

WHEN country roads begin to thaw
In mottled spots of damp and dust,
And fences by the margin draw
Along the frosty crust
Their graphic silhouettes, I say,
The Spring is coming round this way.

WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE MAY

When morning-time is bright with sun
And keen with wind, and both confuse
The dancing, glancing eyes of one
With tears that ooze and ooze—
And nose-tips weep as well as they,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When suddenly some shadow-bird
Goes wavering beneath the gaze,
And through the hedge the moan is heard
Of kine that fain would graze
In grasses new, I smile and say,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When knotted horse-tails are untied,
And teamsters whistle here and there.
And clumsy mitts are laid aside
And choppers' hands are bare,
And chips are thick where children play,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When through the twigs the farmer tramps,
And troughs are chunked beneath the trees,
And fragrant hints of sugar-camps
Astray in every breeze,—

WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE MAY

When early March seems middle May,
The Spring is coming round this way.

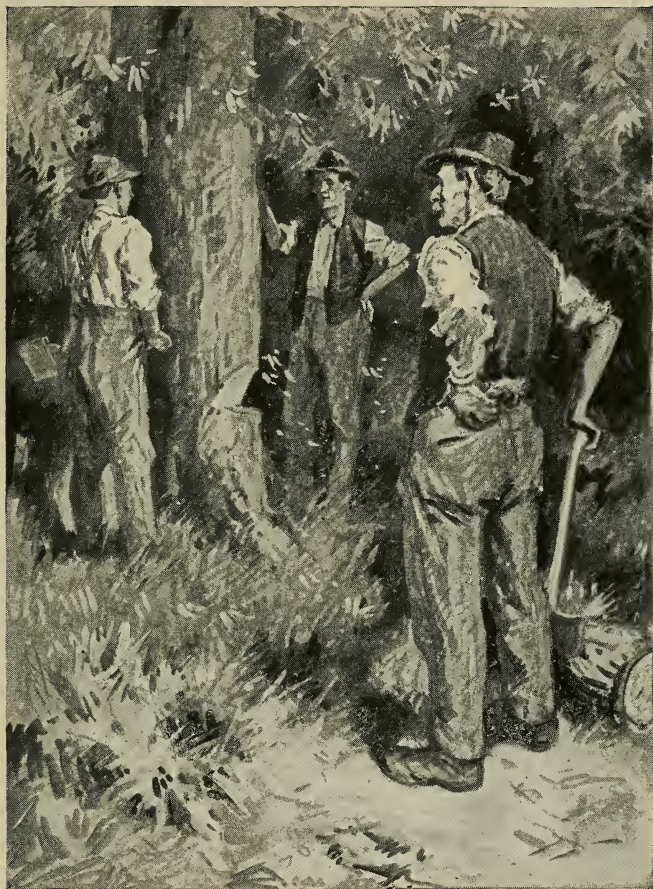
When coughs are changed to laughs, and when
Our frowns melt into smiles of glee,
And all our blood thaws out again
In streams of ecstasy,
And poets wreak their roundelay,
The Spring is coming round this way.





A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

OH! tell me a tale of the airly days—
Of the times as they ust to be;
“Piller of Fi-er” and “Shakespeare’s Plays”
Is a’ most too deep fer me!
I want plane facts, and I want plane words,
Of the good old-fashioned ways,
When speech run free as the songs of birds
’Way back in the airly days.



A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

Tell me a tale of the timber-lands—
Of the old-time pioneers;
Somepin' a pore man understands
With his feelin's 's well as ears.
Tell of the old log house,—about
The loft, and the puncheon flore—
The old fi-er place, with the crane swung out,
And the latch-string through the door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—
They don't need no excuse!—
Don't tech 'em up like the poets does,
Tel theyr all too fine fer use!—
Say they was 'leven in the fambily—
Two beds, and the chist, below,
And the trundle-beds that each helt three,
And the clock and the old bureau.

Then blow the horn at the old back-door
Tel the echoes all halloo,
And the childern gethers home onc't more,
Jest as they ust to do:

A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,
With Toms and Elias, too,
A-marchin' home, with the fife and drums
And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps low
As the moan of the whipperwill,
And wake up Mother, and Ruth and Jo,
All sleepin' at Bethel Hill:
Blow and call tel the faces all
Shine out in the back-log's blaze,
And the shadders dance on the old hewed wall
As they did in the airly days.





A VOICE FROM THE FARM

IT IS my dream to have you here with me,
Out of the heated city's dust and din—
Here where the colts have room to gambol in,
And kine to graze, in clover to the knee.
I want to see your wan face happily
Lit with the wholesome smiles that have not been
In use since the old games you used to win
When we pitched horseshoes: And I want to be
At utter loaf with you in this dim land
Of grove and meadow, while the crickets make
Our own talk tedious, and the bat wields
His bulky flight, as we cease converse and
In a dusk like velvet smoothly take
Our way toward home across the dewy fields.



ROMANCIN'

I, B'EN a-kind' "*musin'*," as the feller says,
and I'm

About o' the conclusion that they hain't no
better time,

When you come to cipher on it, than the times we
ust to know

When we swore our first "*dog-gone-it*" sort' solum-
like and low!

You git my idy, do you?—*Little* tads, you under-
stand—

Jest a-wishin' thue and thue you that you on'y wuz a
man.—

Yit here I am, this minit, even sixty, to a day,
And fergittin' all that's in it, wishin' jest the other
way!

ROMANCIN'

I hain't no hand to lectur' on the times, er *dimon-*
strate

Whare the trouble is, er hector and domineer with
Fate,—

But when I git so flurried, and so pestered-like and
blue,

And so rail owdacious worried, let me tell you what
I do!—

I jest gee-haw the hosses, and onhook the swingle-
tree,

Whare the hazel-bushes tosses down theyr shadders
over me;

And I draw my plug o' navy, and I climb the fence,
and set

Jest a-thinkin' here, i gravy! tel my eyes is wringin'-
wet!

Tho' I still kin see the trouble o' the *presunt*, I kin
see—

Kindo' like my sight wuz double—all the things that
ust to be;

And the flutter o' the robin and the teeter o' the wren
Sets the willer-branches bobbin' "howdy-do" thum

Now to Then!

ROMANCIN'

The deadnin' and the thicket's jest a-b'ilin' full of
June,
From the rattle o' the cricket, to the yallar-hammer's
tune;
And the catbird in the bottom, and the sapsuck on
the snag,
Seems ef they can't—od-rot 'em!—jest do nothin'
else but brag!

They's music in the twitter of the bluebird and the
jay,
And that sassy little critter jest a-peckin' all the
day;
They's music in the "flicker," and they's music in
the thrush,
And they's music in the snicker o' the chipmunk in
the brush!

They's music *all around* me!—And I go back, in a
dream
Sweeter yit than ever found me fast asleep,—and in
the stream
That ust to split the medder whare the dandylions
growed,
I stand knee-deep, and redder than the sunset down
the road.



ROMANCIN'

Then's when I' b'en a-fishin'!—And they's other
fellers, too,
With theyr hick'ry-poles a-swishin' out behind 'em;
and a few
Little "shiners" on our stringers, with theyr tails tip-
toein' bloom,
As we dance 'em in our fingers all the happy journey
home.

I kin see us, true to Natur', thum the time we started
out,
With a biscuit and a 'tater in our little "round-
about"!—
I kin see our lines a-tanglin', and our elbows in a jam,
And our naked legs a-danglin' thum the apern o'
the dam.

I kin see the honeysuckle climbin' up around the mill,
And kin hear the worter chuckle, and the wheel a-
growlin' still;
And thum the bank below it I kin steal the old canoe,
And jest git in and row it like the miller ust to do.

ROMANCIN'

W'y, I git my fancy focussed on the past so mortul
plane
I kin even smell the locus'-blossoms bloomin' in the
lane;
And I hear the cow-bells clinkin' sweeter tunes 'n
"Money-musk"
Fer the lightnin' bugs a-blinkin' and a-dancin' in the
dusk.

And when I've kep' on "musin'," as the feller says,
tel I'm
Firm-fixed in the conclusion that they hain't no
better time,
When you come to cipher on it, than the *old* times,—
I de-clare
I kin wake and say "dog-gone-it!" jest as soft as any
prayer!





UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

UP and down old Brandywine,
In the days 'at's past and gone—
With a dad-burn hook-and-line
And a saplin' pole—i swawn!
I've had more fun, to the square
Inch, than ever *anywhere*!
Heaven to come can't discount *mine*
Up and down old Brandywine!

UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

Hain't no sense in *wishin'*—yit
Wisht to goodness I *could* jes
“Gee” the blame’ world round and git
Back to that old happiness!—
Kindo’ drive back in the shade
“The old Covered Bridge” there laid
’Crosst the crick, and sorto’ soak
My soul over, hub and spoke!

Honest, now!—it hain’t no *dream*
’At I’m wantin’,—but *the fac’s*
As they wuz; the same old stream,
And the same old times, i jacks!—
Gim me back my bare feet—and
Stonebruise too!—And scratched and tanned!
And let hottest dog-days shine
Up and down old Brandywine!

In and on betwixt the trees
’Long the banks, pour down yer noon,
Kindo’ curdled with the breeze
And the yallerhammer’s tune;



UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

And the smokin', chokin' dust
O' the turnpike at its wusst—
Saturd'ys, say, when it seems
Road's jes jammed with country teams!—

Whilse the old town, fur away
'Crosst the hazy pastur'-land,
Dozed-like in the heat o' day
Peaceful' as a hired hand.
Jolt the gravel th'ough the floor
O' the old bridge!—grind and roar
With yer blame percession-line—
Up and down old Brandywine!

Souse me and my new straw-hat
Off the foot-log!—what *I* care?—
Fist shoved in the crown o' that—
Like the old Clown ust to wear.
Wouldn't swop it fer a' old
Gin-u-wine raal crown o' gold!—
Keep yer *King* ef you'll gim me
Jes the boy I ust to be!

UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

Spill my fishin'-worms! er steal
My best "goggle-eye!"—but you
Can't lay hands on joys I feel
Nibblin' like they ust to do!
So, in memory, to-day
Same old ripple lips away
At my "cork" and saggin' line,
Up and down old Brandywine!

There the logs is, round the hill,
Where "Old Irvin" ust to lift
Out sunfish from daylight till
Dewfall—'fore he'd leave "The Drift"
And give *us* a chance—and then
Kindo' fish back home again,
Ketchin' 'em jes left and right
Where *we* hadn't got a "bite!"

Er, 'way windin' out and in,—
Old path th'ough the iurnweeds
And dog-fennel to yer chin—
Then come suddent, th'ough the reeds

UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

And cat-tails, smack into where
Them-air woods-hogs ust to scare
Us clean 'crosst the County-line,
Up and down old Brandywine!

But the dim roar o' the dam
It 'ud coax us funder still
To'rds the old race, slow and ca'm,
Slidin' on to Huston's mill—
Where, I 'spect, "The Freeport crowd"
Never *warmed* to us er 'lowed
We wuz quite so overly
Welcome as we aimed to be.

Still it 'peared-like ever'thing—
Fur away from home as *there*—
Had more *relish*-like, i jing!—
Fish in stream, er bird in air!
O them rich old bottom-lands,
Past where Cowden's Schoolhouse stands!
Wortermelons—*master-mine*!
Up and down old Brandywine!

UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

And sich pop-paws!—Lumps o' raw
Gold and green,—jes oozy th'ough
With ripe yaller—like you've saw
Custard-pie with no crust to:
And jes *gorges* o' wild plums,
Till a feller'd suck his thumbs
Clean up to his elbows! *My!*—
Me some more er lem me die!

Up and down old Brandywine! . . .
Stripe me with pokeberry-juice!—
Flick me with a pizenvine
And yell "*Yip!*" and lem me loose!
—Old now as I then wuz young,
'F I could sing as I *have* sung,
Song 'ud surely ring *dee-vine*
Up and down old Brandywine!





SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

I HAIN'T no hand at tellin' tales,
Er spinnin' yarns, as the sailors say;
Someway o' 'nother, language fails
To slide fer me in the oily way
That *lawyers* has; and I wisht it would,
Fer I've got somepin' that I call good;
But bein' only a country squire,
I've learned to listen and admire,
Ruther preferrin' to be addressed
Than talk myse'f—but I'll do my best:—

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

Old Jeff Thompson—well, I'll say,
Was the clos'test man I ever saw!—
Rich as cream, but the porest pay,
And the meanest man to work fer—La!
I've knowed that man to work one "hand"—
Fer little er nothin', you understand—
From four o'clock in the morning light
Tel eight and nine o'clock at night,
And then find fault with his appetite!
He'd drive all over the neighborhood
To miss the place where a toll-gate stood,
And slip in town, by some old road
That no two men in the county knowed,
With a jag o' wood, and a sack o' wheat,
That wouldn't burn and you couldn't eat!
And the trades he'd make, 'll I jest de-clare,
Was enough to make a preacher swear!
And then he'd hitch, and hang about
Tel the lights in the toll-gate was blowed out,
And then the turnpike he'd turn in
And sneak his way back home ag'in!

Some folks hint, and I make no doubt,
That that's what wore his old wife out—

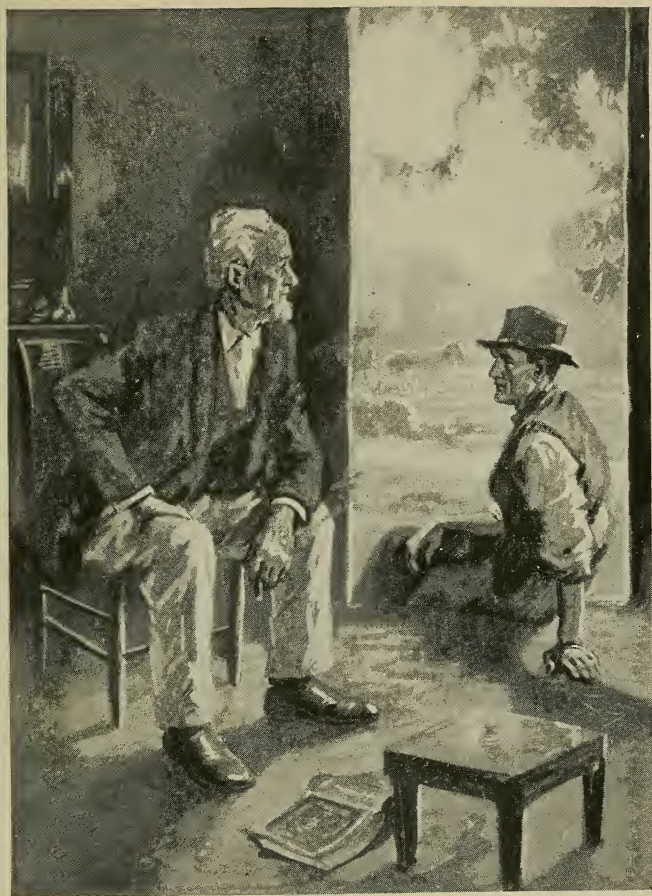
SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

Toilin' away from day to day
And year to year, through heat and cold,
Uncomplainin'—the same old way
The martyrs died in the days of old;
And a-clingin', too, as the martyrs done,
T'o one fixed faith, and her *only* one,—
Little Patience, the sweetest child
That ever wept unrickonciled,
Er felt the pain and the ache and sting
That only a mother's death can bring.
Patience Thompson!—I think that name
Must 'a' come from a power above,
Fer it seemed to fit her jest the same
As a *gaiter* would, er a fine kid glove!
And to see that girl, with all the care
Of the household on her—I de-clare
It was *oudacious*, the work she'd do,
And the thousand plans that she'd putt through;
And sing like a medder-lark all day long,
And drownd her cares in the joys o' song;
And *laugh* sometimes tel the farmer's "hand,"
Away fur off in the fields, would stand
A-listenin', with the plow half drawn,
Tel the coaxin' echoes called him on;

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

And the furries seemed, in his dreamy eyes,
Like foot-paths a-leadin' to Paradise,
As off through the hazy atmosphere
The call fer dinner reached his ear.

Now *love's* as cunnin' a little thing
As a hummin'-bird upon the wing,
And as liable to poke his nose
Jest where folks would least suppose,—
And more'n likely build his nest
Right in the heart you'd leave unguessed,
And live and thrive at your expense—
At least, that's *my* experience.
And old Jeff Thompson often thought,
In his se'fish way, that the quiet John
Was a stiddy chap, as a farm-hand *ought*
To always be,—fer the airliest dawn
Found John busy—and "*easy*," too,
Whenever his *wages* would fall due!—
To sum him up with a final touch,
He *eat* so little and *worked* so much,
That old Jeff laughed to hisse'f and said
"He makes *me* money and airns his bread!"



SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

But John, fer all of his quietude,
Would sometimes drap a word er so
That none but *Patience* understood,
And none but her was *meant* to know!—
Maybe at meal-times John would say,
As the sugar-bowl come down his way,
“Thanky, no; *my* coffee’s sweet
Enough fer *me!*” with sich conceit,
She’d know at once, without no doubt,
He meant because *she* poured it out;
And smile and blush, and all sich stuff,
And ast ef it was “*strong* enough?”
And git the answer, neat and trim,
“It *couldn’t* be too ‘strong’ fer *him!*”

And so things went fer ’bout a year,
Tel John, at last, found pluck to go
And pour his tale in the old man’s ear—
And ef it had been *hot lead*, I know
It couldn’t ’a’ raised a louder fuss,
Ner ’a’ riled the old man’s temper wuss!
He jest *lit* in, and cussed and swore,
And lunged and rared, and ripped and tore,

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

And told John jest to leave his door,
And not to darken it no more!
But Patience cried, with eyes all wet,
“Remember, John, and don’t ferget,
Whatever comes, I love you yet!”
But the old man thought, in his se’fish way,
“I’ll see her married rich some day;
And *that*,” thinks he, “is money fer *me*—
And my will’s *law*, as it ought to be!”
So when, in the course of a month er so,
A *widower*, with a farm er two,
Comes to Jeff’s, w’y, the folks, you know
Had to *talk*—as the folks’ll do:
It was the talk of the neighborhood—
Patience and *John*, and *their* affairs;—
And this old chap with a few gray hairs
Had “cut John out,” it was understood.
And some folks reckoned “Patience, too,
Knowed what *she* was a-goin’ to do—
It was *like* her—la! indeed!—
All *she* loved was *dollars* and *cents*—
Like old *Jeff*—and they saw no need
Fer *John* to pine at *her* negligence!”
But others said, in a *kinder* way,
They missed the songs she used to sing—
They missed the smiles that used to play

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

Over her face, and the laughin' ring
Of her glad voice—that *everything*
Of her *old* se'f seemed dead and gone,
And this was the ghost that they gazed on!

Tel finally it was noised about
There was a *weddin'* soon to be
Down at Jeff's; and the "cat was out"
Shore enough!—'Ll the *Jee-mun-nee!*
It *riled* me when John told me so,—
Fer *I was a friend o' John's*, you know;
And his trimblin' voice jest broke in two—
As a feller's voice'll sometimes do.—
And I says, says I, "Ef I know my biz—
And I think I know what *jestice* is,—
I've read *some* law—and I'd advise
A man like you to wipe his eyes
And square his jaws and start *ag'in*,
Fer jestice is a-goin' to win!"
And it wasn't long tel his eyes had cleared
As blue as the skies, and the *sun* appeared
In the shape of a good old-fashioned smile
That I hadn't seen fer a long, long while.

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

So we talked on fer a' hour er more,
And sunned ourselves in the open door,—
Tel a hoss-and-buggy down the road
Come a-drivin' up, that I guess John *knowed*,—
Fer he winked and says, "I'll dessappear—
They'd smell a mice ef they saw *me* here!"
And he thumbed his nose at the old gray mare,
And hid hisse'f in the house somewhere.
Well.—The rig drove up: and I raised my head
As old Jeff hollered to me and said
That "him and his old friend there had come
To see ef the squire was at home."
. . . I told 'em "I was; and I *aimed* to be
At every chance of a weddin'-fee!"
And then I laughed—and they laughed, too,—
Fer that was the object they had in view.
"Would I be on hands at eight that night?"
They ast; and 's-I, "You're mighty right,
I'll be on hand!" And then I *bu'st*
Out a-laughin' my very wu'st,—
And so did they, as they wheeled away
And drove to'rds town in a cloud o' dust.
Then I shet the door, and me and John
Laughed and *laughed*, and jest *laughed* on,

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

Tel Mother drapped her specs, and *by*
Jeewhillikers! I thought she'd *die!*—
And she couldn't 'a' told, I'll bet my hat,
What on earth she was laughin' at!

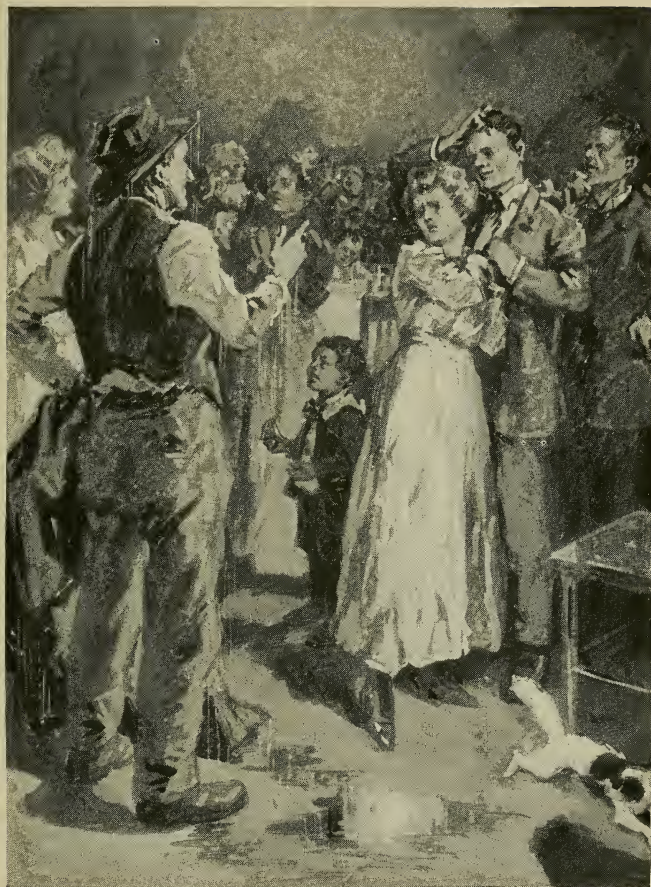
But all o' the fun o' the tale hain't done!—
Fer a drizzlin' rain had jest begun,
And a-havin' 'bout four mile' to ride,
I jest concluded I'd better light
Out fer Jeff's and save my hide,—
Fer *it was a-goin' to storm, that night!*
So we went down to the barn, and John
Saddled my beast, and I got on;
And he told me somepin' to not ferget,
And when I left, he was *laughin'* yet.

And, 'proachin' on to my journey's end,
The great big draps o' the rain come down,
And the thunder growled in a way to lend
An awful look to the lowerin' frown
The dull sky wore; and the lightnin' glanced
Tel my old mare jest *more'n* pranced,
And tossed her head, and bugged her eyes
To about four times their natchurl size,

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

As the big black lips of the clouds 'ud drap
Out some oath of a thunderclap,
And threaten on in an undertone
That chilled a feller clean to the bone!

But I struck shelter soon enough
To save myse'f. And the house was jammed
With the women-folks, and the weddin'-stuff:—
A great, long table, fairly *crammed*
With big pound-cakes—and chops and steaks—
And roasts and stews—and stumick-aches
Of every fashion, form, and size,
From twisters up to punkin-pies!
And candies, oranges, and figs,
And reezins,—all the “whilligigs”
And “jim-cracks” that the law allows
On sich occasions!—Bobs and bows
Of gigglin' girls, with corkscrew curls,
And fancy ribbons, reds and blues,
And “beau-ketchers” and “curliques”
To beat the world! And seven o'clock
Brought old Jeff;—and brought—*the groom*,—
With a sideboard-collar on, and stock
That choked him so, he hadn't room



SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

To *swaller* in, er even sneeze,
Er clear his th'oat with any ease
Er comfort—and a good square cough
Would saw his Adam's apple off!

But as fer *Patience*—*My! Oomh-oomh!*—
I never saw her look so sweet!—
Her face was cream and roses, too;
And then them eyes o' heavenly blue
Jest made an angel all complete!
And when she split 'em up in smiles
And splintered 'em around the room,
And danced acrost and met the groom,
And *laughed out loud*—It kind o' spiles
My language when I come to that—
Fer, as she laid away his hat,
Thinks I, "*The papers hid inside
Of that said hat must make a bride
A happy one fer all her life,*
Er else a *wrecked and wretched wife!*"
And, someway, then, I thought of *John*,—
Then looked towards *Patience* . . . She
was *gone!*

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

The door stood open, and the rain
Was dashin' in; and sharp and plain
Above the storm we heerd a cry—
A ringin', laughin', loud "Good-by!"
That died away, as fleet and fast
A hoss's hoofs went splashin' past!
And that was all. 'Twas done that quick! . . .
You heerd o' fellers "lookin' sick"?
I wisht you'd seen *the groom* jest then—
I wisht you'd seen them two old men,
With starin' eyes that fairly *glared*
At one another, and the scared
And empty faces of the crowd,—
I wisht you could 'a' been allowed
To jest look on and see it all,—
And heerd the girls and women bawl
And wring their hands; and heerd old Jeff
A-cussin' as he swung hisse'f
Upon his hoss, who champed his bit
As though old Nick had holt of it:
And cheek by jowl the two old wrecks
Rode off as though they'd break their necks.

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

And as we all stood starin' out
Into the night, I felt the brush
Of some one's hand, and turned about,
And I heerd a voice that whispered, "*Hush!—*
They're waitin' in the kitchen, and
You're wanted. Don't you understand?"
Well, ef my *memory* serves me now,
I think I winked.—Well, anyhow,
I left the crowd a-gawkin' there,
And jest slipped off around to where
The back door opened, and went in,
And turned and shet the door ag'in,
And maybe *locked* it—couldn't swear,—
A woman's arms around me makes
Me liable to make mistakes.—
I read a marriage license nex',
But as I didn't have my specs
I jest *inferred* it was all right,
And tied the knot so mortal-tight
That Patience and my old friend John
Was safe enough from that time on!

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

Well, now, I might go on and tell
How all the joke at last leaked out,
And how the youngsters raised the yell
And rode the happy groom about
Upon their shoulders; how the bride
Was kissed a hundred times beside
The one *I* give her,—tel she cried
And laughed untel she like to died!
I might go on and tell you all
About the supper—and the *ball*.—
You'd ought to see me twist my heel
Through jest one old Furginny reel
Afore you die! er tromp the strings
Of some old fiddle tel she sings
Some old cowntillion, don't you know,
That putts the devil in yer toe!

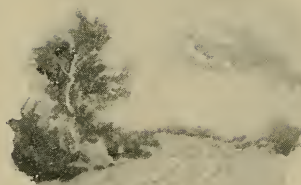
We kep' the dancin' up tel *four*
O'clock, I reckon—maybe more.—
We hardly heerd the thunders roar,
Er *thought* about the *storm* that blowed—
And them two fellers on the road!
Tel all at onc't we heerd the door
Bu'st open, and a voice that *swore*,—
And old Jeff Thompson tuck the floor.

SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY

He shuck hisse'f and looked around
Like some old dog about half-drowned—
His hat, I reckon, weighed ten pound
To say the least, and I'll say, *shore,*
His overcoat weighed fifty more—
The wettest man you ever saw,
To have so dry a son-in-law!

He sized it all; and Patience laid
Her hand in John's, and looked afraid,
And waited. And a stiller set
O' folks, I *know*, you never met
In any court room, where with dread
They wait to hear a verdick read.

The old man turned his eyes on me:
"And have you married 'em?" says he.
I nodded "Yes." "Well, that'll do,"
He says, "and now we're th'ough with *you,—*
You jest clear out, and I decide
And promise to be satisfied!"
He hadn't nothin' more to say.
I saw, of course, how matters lay,
And left. But as I rode away
I heerd the roosters crow fer day.



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